

Worship My Feet: Volume 1

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Welcome

When people hear the phrase “content creator,” they usually imagine ring lights, selfies, affiliate links, and somebody pretending to be excited about protein powder on social media.

And yes, technically, I am a content creator. But not that kind.

I create moments: Tension. Fantasy. Confusion. Temptation. The dangerous little spark that appears in someone’s eyes when they realize they’re being seen more clearly than they intended.

That’s the real content.

The stories in this collection grew out of years of noticing people. Especially men. Men who posture. Men who pretend. Men who hide strange little desires beneath expensive suits, gym memberships, wedding rings, polished manners, and carefully rehearsed confidence. Most people

move through life acting out versions of themselves they think the world expects. I've always enjoyed disrupting that performance.

Maybe a little too much.

The truth is, I've never been especially interested in power that comes from status, money, or job titles. Those things are fragile. Real power is psychological. It's knowing exactly what someone wants before they're ready to admit it themselves. It's understanding how quickly confidence melts when temptation, embarrassment, attraction, and honesty all collide at once.

And honestly?

I find people fascinating when they start unraveling.

Especially the arrogant ones.

Especially the men who think they're in control.

That's probably why these stories drift so naturally between glamour and manipulation, flirtation and confession, fantasy and vulnerability. One moment, I'm teasing a salesman in a shoe store. The next, I'm at a billionaire's mansion in Bel Air wearing stilettos worth more than a car. Somewhere else, I'm making trouble at brunch, tormenting a smug executive in a hotel room, or quietly dis-

mantling some gym bro's idea of masculinity while he tries desperately to hold onto his dignity.

It's never really about sex alone.

It's about tension.

Anticipation.

The strange intimacy of attention.

The moment somebody realizes they've stopped pretending.

And yes, if I'm being honest, I enjoy the game. I enjoy watching polished, powerful people become flustered. I enjoy exposing contradictions. I enjoy discovering what people secretly crave once they stop worrying about appearing normal.

Maybe that makes me dangerous.

Or maybe it just makes me observant.

Either way, the stories you're about to read exist in that delicious gray area between seduction and psychology, elegance and chaos. Some are playful. Some are darker. Some are glamorous enough to smell faintly of champagne and perfume. Others happen in awkward little private corners where people reveal far more than they intended.

None of them are entirely innocent.

And neither am I.

So if you've ever been fascinated by hidden desires, complicated attraction, dangerous flirtation, power games, luxury, temptation, or the electric thrill of watching somebody lose composure in real time...

Welcome.

You're probably going to enjoy this very, very much.

Love,

Holly

Chapter One

The Shoe Store

The moment I walked into the shoe store, I could feel eyes turning toward me.

Not all of them, of course. Just his.

He stood near the mirrored wall, arranging boxes with the kind of careful concentration retail workers fake when they're trying not to stare at a woman. Tall, dark-haired, maybe early thirties. Crisp black shirt. Nervous posture. The type of guy who wanted desperately to look professional.

Which only made teasing him more fun.

I took my time crossing the store, letting my hips sway beneath my soft cream-colored dress. My blond hair brushed my shoulders as I glanced casually over the displays of sandals and heels.

Then I sat down slowly on one of the velvet benches.

His eyes flicked toward my legs.

Bingo.

I crossed one leg over the other and slipped off my right shoe with the tip of my toe. My bare foot emerged slowly, deliberately, dangling in the air as if I had no idea he was watching.

But I knew.

Oh, I definitely knew.

“Can I help you find something?” he asked a little too quickly.

I looked up innocently. “Maybe.”

His gaze betrayed him for half a second. He looked directly at my foot before jerking his eyes back upward.

Cute.

“I need heels,” I said. “Something dangerous.”

He swallowed. “Dangerous?”

“The kind that make men stare.”

A faint flush crept into his cheeks.

“I’m Ethan,” he said.

“Holly.”

I let my bare foot swing lazily while he approached. He tried to keep his attention on the shoe displays, but every few seconds his eyes drifted downward again.

I leaned closer slightly.

“You can look, Ethan.”

“I wasn’t—”

“You were.”

His ears turned red.

That only encouraged me more.

I slipped off my other shoe and stretched both bare feet in front of me, flexing my toes slowly against the soft carpet.

His breathing changed.

Just a little.

But enough.

“So,” I said sweetly, “what would you recommend for a girl who likes attention?”

He cleared his throat and grabbed a few boxes from a nearby shelf. “Open-toed heels are popular right now.”

“Open-toed?” I smiled. “Perfect.”

He knelt in front of me to open the first box, and I could practically feel the tension radiating off him. He was trying

so hard to act normal while sitting inches away from my bare feet.

I almost admired the effort.

"These are Italian leather," he said carefully. "Very comfortable."

"Comfortable is boring."

I slipped one heel onto my foot anyway, letting him fasten the delicate ankle strap. His fingers brushed lightly against my skin.

Tiny contact.

Huge reaction.

His jaw tightened immediately afterward.

I pretended not to notice.

"What do you think?" I asked, extending my leg.

"They look..." He hesitated. "Very nice."

"Just nice?"

His eyes traveled slowly from my toes up my calf.

"Very nice," he corrected quietly.

I stood and walked toward the mirror.

The heels clicked sharply against the polished floor, drawing attention from across the store. I knew exactly how I looked—blond waves, tight waist, long legs, curves wrapped in silk. The shoes only amplified everything.

And Ethan followed me like gravity had hold of him.

I turned slowly in front of the mirror. “I think I need to test them properly.”

“How?”

I smiled over my shoulder.

“By walking around.”

For the next several minutes, I wandered the store while Ethan pretended to reorganize displays nearby. Every time I caught him staring at my feet, he’d glance away too late.

I loved watching him lose the battle with himself.

At one point, I sat again and crossed my legs slowly, letting one heel dangle from my toes.

His eyes locked onto it instantly.

“You really like shoes, huh?” I teased.

“Yes,” he said automatically.

I laughed softly. “That’s not what I meant.”

Silence.

The air between us thickened.

Finally, he exhaled. “You enjoy making this difficult.”

“Maybe I enjoy honesty.”

His gaze met mine then, uncertain but undeniably heated.

“What do you want me to say?”

I uncrossed my legs and leaned closer.

“That you can’t stop looking.”

The pause lasted too long to deny it.

Then he admitted quietly, “I can’t.”

That confession sent a thrill through me. Not because it surprised me. Because he finally said it out loud.

I stood again and walked toward the back hallway where the private fitting rooms were located. Then I glanced back at him.

“Well?” I asked.

He hesitated.

“This probably isn’t—”

“Professional?” I finished.

He gave a helpless little smile.

“Probably not.”

I lowered my voice and said, “Come help me decide if the heels fit properly.” For one long second he stayed frozen behind the counter. Then he followed me.

The fitting room was small, softly lit, with a padded bench and three mirrors surrounding us from different angles. The moment the door clicked shut behind him, the atmosphere changed completely.

No music from the store.

No customers.

Just the two of us.

Ethan stood awkwardly near the door while I sat down and slowly crossed one leg over the other.

“You look nervous,” I said.

“I could lose my job.”

“You could also leave.”

He didn’t move. Exactly.

I extended one foot toward him, the black heel catching the light.

“What do you think?” I asked softly. His eyes traced every inch of my leg before settling on my toes.

“I think...” He stopped himself.

“Go on.”

“They suit you.”

“Still being careful?”

He exhaled shakily.

“I think they’re the sexiest shoes in the store.”

I smiled, and said, “There you are.”

Something about the enclosed space seemed to unravel his restraint. His breathing was heavier now. His eyes lingered openly instead of pretending not to.

I stood and took a slow step toward him. Then another. Until he was close enough to smell my perfume.

“Get on your knees,” I said quietly.

His eyes widened.

“Holly...”

“Do you want to?”

The silence answered for him. Slowly, almost uncertainly, he lowered himself in front of me.

I looked down at him, enjoying the contrast—the polished salesman kneeling at my feet while I towered above him in high heels.

Power surged warmly through my chest. I shifted slightly, and his eyes flicked upward for half a second before immediately darting away again.

But not before he realized my dress hid absolutely nothing underneath. His breath caught. I smirked.

“Distracted?”

“Holly...”

His voice sounded wrecked now.

I rested one hand lightly against the wall behind me and lifted my heel, extending my foot toward him.

“Closer,” I whispered.

He obeyed immediately. The look in his eyes nearly made me shiver. Not confidence. Not arrogance. Pure fascination.

I ran my foot lightly along his shoulder, feeling him tense beneath the touch.

“You’ve been imagining this since I walked in, haven’t you?”

He didn’t answer.

“You can be honest.”

Finally, almost embarrassed, he nodded.

I smiled slowly.

“Good.”

My toes brushed lightly against his jawline before I lowered my foot again.

“Look at you,” I murmured. “Trying so hard to behave.”

His hands flexed at his sides. I could tell he wanted to touch me. But he was waiting for permission. That was the fun part. I tilted my head slightly and said, “You may kiss my toes.”

He stared at me for one stunned second before leaning forward carefully, reverently almost, pressing soft kisses against the straps of the heel and the curve of my toes.

A shiver rolled through me.

Not because of the contact itself, but because of the devotion in it. He looked up at me afterward like he was waiting to see whether he'd crossed a line.

"You really do love this, don't you?" I asked.

"Yes," he admitted quietly.

I slid my foot lightly beneath his chin, lifting his gaze back toward me.

"You're adorable when you stop pretending."

His composure was almost completely gone now. I could see it in the way his chest rose and fell, in the way he stared up at me like I was some impossible fantasy that had suddenly stepped into real life.

And honestly?

I loved every second of it. He reached toward me instinctively, then stopped himself. I noticed immediately.

"What's wrong?"

"I shouldn't."

"That's true."

The tension nearly crackled between us. I stepped closer until the pointed heel rested between his knees. Then I gave him a wicked little smile.

"But I like watching you struggle."

He laughed once under his breath, completely defeated.

“You planned this from the beginning, didn’t you?”

“Maybe.”

“You walked in here looking for someone to torment.”

“Not someone,” I corrected softly. “You.”

That made him shake his head in disbelief.

“You have any idea what you’re doing to me?”

“Yes.”

I turned slowly toward the mirror, admiring the way the heels shaped my legs. Then I glanced back at him over my shoulder.

“And you’re still on your knees.”

He looked down briefly as if only just realizing it, but he didn’t stand.

I walked back toward the bench and slipped off one heel slowly, letting it fall beside me. Then the other. Ethan watched every movement.

I leaned back casually and stretched my bare legs toward him again.

“What happens now?” he asked quietly.

I smiled.

“Now I leave.”

His expression flashed with disappointment. Cute again.

I slipped my shoes back on one at a time while he stood slowly, still looking dazed.

Before opening the fitting room door, I paused beside him.

“So here’s the rule,” I said softly.

He looked at me carefully.

“You don’t get to follow me.”

A faint smile touched his lips. “That’s probably wise.”

“You also don’t get to forget me.”

“That’s impossible.”

I leaned close enough for him to feel my breath near his ear.

“And you definitely don’t get to touch yourself until after I’ve walked out of the store.”

His eyes closed briefly.

“Holly...”

I smiled triumphantly and opened the door.

The sounds of the store returned instantly—music, conversations, ringing registers. Ordinary life.

But neither of us felt ordinary anymore. I walked calmly toward the front entrance, the heels clicking sharply against the floor. I could feel his eyes on me the entire way.

Just before stepping outside, I glanced back. Ethan stood frozen near the fitting room hallway, completely wrecked, trying desperately to regain his professional composure.

I gave him one final smile.

Then I slipped my sunglasses on and disappeared into the afternoon sunlight, leaving him exactly where I wanted him:

Wanting more.

Chapter Two

The Wedding

I spotted Dan from across the ballroom.
Poor Dan.

He was sitting alone at a table near the dance floor, one hand wrapped around a whiskey glass, pretending to watch the bride and groom while everyone else spun beneath the chandeliers. His tie was loosened. His shoulders slumped. Miserable.

And then he saw me.

That woke him up immediately.

I'll admit it: I enjoyed the effect I had on him. Maybe a little too much.

The wedding reception was pure luxury—crystal lighting, gold-trimmed linens, champagne flowing like water—but I'd been bored out of my mind for the last hour.

My date, Trevor, was drunk enough to be passionately explaining cryptocurrency to the bartender while sweating through his tuxedo.

Meanwhile, I was sitting there looking like sin in six-inch stilettos with nowhere to direct all that restless energy.

So naturally, my eyes wandered toward trouble. Toward Dan, my sister Peg's husband.

Technically off limits, which, unfortunately, made everything about him more interesting.

Dan had always been terrible at hiding things. Especially around me.

The first clue had come last Thanksgiving when I'd walked into the mudroom unexpectedly and caught him holding one of my sneakers. Not just holding it.

Sniffing it.

The expression on his face when he realized I'd seen him was almost worth feeling guilty over.

Almost.

After that, the tension between us became impossible to ignore. Lingering looks. Nervous smiles. His eyes always drifting downward whenever I crossed my legs barefoot around the house.

And tonight?

Tonight, he looked absolutely doomed.

I crossed the ballroom slowly toward him, my heels clicking sharply against the marble floor. Heads turned as I passed. I knew exactly how I looked.

Blond hair loose over my shoulders. Low-cut satin blouse showing dangerous amounts of cleavage. Black skirt cut scandalously high above my knees. Long legs sharpened by six-inch stilettos. I didn't dress like this by accident.

Dan watched me approach with the expression of a man seeing disaster coming toward him in slow motion.

"Hey stranger," I purred as I slid into the chair beside him.

"Holly."

The way he said my name always sounded slightly breathless.

"How's the party?"

He gave a tired laugh. "Depends who you ask."

"Oh no." I leaned closer. "You fought with Peg again?"

His jaw tightened immediately. Bingo.

"She wanted to leave early," he muttered. "I didn't. Then she accused me of drinking too much."

"You are drinking too much."

“Probably.”

I let my legs cross slowly beneath the table. Dan’s eyes dropped instantly to my heels. Then my calves. Then higher. He tried to recover, but he was never fast enough. I pretended not to notice. Mostly because watching him struggle was delicious.

“You look incredible tonight,” he said quietly.

“Careful.”

“I’m serious.”

“I know.”

His gaze lingered openly now, tracing the straps wrapped around my ankles. I could practically see the thoughts running through his head.

Dan loved feet.

Not casually.

Not secretly.

Obsessively.

And my feet, specifically, turned him into a complete wreck.

I leaned back in my chair and let one heel dangle lazily from my toes.

His eyes locked onto the movement immediately.

God, he was easy.

"You're staring again," I teased.

He looked away fast. "Sorry."

"Don't apologize. It's flattering."

The tension between us thickened instantly. Music pulsed from the ballroom. Laughter echoed around us. Nobody paid attention to the dangerous little bubble forming at our table.

I tilted my head.

"You know what I really want right now?"

"What?"

"A cigarette."

"You still smoke?"

"Only when I'm feeling wicked."

His expression shifted at that word.

Wicked.

Interesting.

I uncrossed my legs slowly. Very slowly.

And for one brief second, the movement gave him a clear glimpse beneath my skirt.

No panties. Dan froze. Absolutely froze. His eyes widened before darting back upward, but by then it was too late.

I'd seen the reaction. My pulse quickened with satisfaction.

"You feel like keeping me company outside?" I asked sweetly.

He swallowed hard.

"Yeah," he said immediately.

Of course he did.

The terrace outside the ballroom overlooked the city skyline, all silver lights and warm summer air. Music drifted faintly through the open doors behind us while guests moved in soft silhouettes beyond the glass.

I leaned against the railing and slipped a cigarette between my lips.

Dan lit it for me.

His hand trembled slightly.

And when he leaned in with the lighter, he got just a little too close. I could smell whiskey and cologne and nervousness radiating off him.

I inhaled slowly, then exhaled smoke into the night air.

Dan watched me like he was hypnotized. That surprised me a little.

"You like women who smoke?" I asked.

His ears reddened. "Maybe."

“Why?”

He hesitated too long. I smiled knowingly. “Because it looks bossy?”

His silence answered for him. I laughed softly.

“Poor Dan.”

“What does that mean?”

“It means you always look like you’re five seconds away from losing control around me.”

His eyes darkened immediately. The atmosphere shifted. Dangerously.

I walked toward a cushioned bench near the edge of the terrace and sat down carefully. My feet were killing me after hours in those stilettos.

Without breaking eye contact, I slipped one heel off. Then the other.

Dan stared openly now. No pretending. No hiding.

Just raw fascination as I flexed my bare feet against the cool stone floor.

“Oh my God,” I sighed dramatically. “These shoes are torture.”

He looked almost dizzy. I stretched one leg toward him slightly.

“Massage them for me?”

The request barely left my mouth before he moved. Dan practically dropped onto the bench beside my feet, hands hovering uncertainly until I gave him a tiny nod of permission.

Then his fingers touched my foot.

A shiver rolled through me instantly.

Not because it was sexual exactly.

Because of how intensely focused he was.

His thumbs worked slowly against the arch while I leaned back smoking, watching him unravel in real time.

He was sweating now.

Actually sweating.

“You’re very good at that,” I murmured.

Dan swallowed hard without looking up.

I blew smoke gently toward his face.

“Such a good boy,” I teased.

His hands tightened involuntarily around my foot.

The effect those words had on him was immediate and unmistakable.

Interesting. Very interesting.

“You like that?” I asked softly.

“Holly...”

His voice sounded wrecked. I laughed quietly and rested my head back against the bench. The city lights glittered around us while my brother-in-law sat there massaging my bare feet like he'd been waiting his entire life for permission.

And honestly? I didn't want it to stop.

Then came Peg's voice: "What the hell is going on?"

Dan jerked backward like he'd been electrocuted. I looked up calmly to find my sister standing in the terrace doorway with murder in her eyes.

Oops.

Again.

To be fair, this wasn't technically the first suspicious situation she'd caught us in.

There was also Christmas Eve.

And that thing with the hotel pool.

But tonight definitely looked bad.

Dan scrambled upright immediately. "Peg, it's not what it looks like."

Peg stared at him. "Really? Because it looks like you're kneeling at my sister's feet."

"Well—her shoes hurt—"

"Oh, my God."

I took another lazy drag from my cigarette, deliberately unbothered.

Peg turned toward me with a glare sharp enough to cut glass.

“You,” she snapped.

“What?”

“You know exactly what.”

I gave her an innocent smile. Dan looked like he wanted the earth to swallow him whole.

Peg grabbed his arm. “We’re going back inside.”

Before he turned away, Dan glanced at me desperately. And that reckless little hunger in his eyes made my decision for me. I met his gaze and tilted my head subtly toward the ballroom.

Then toward the hallway beyond it. The men’s restroom. His eyes widened slightly.

I held his stare.

Dan lifted two fingers casually against his leg.

Two minutes.

Message received.

I smiled faintly and watched Peg drag him back inside.

Then I crushed out my cigarette and stood.

The adrenaline buzzing through me now was intoxicating.

Wrong.

Absolutely wrong.

Which made it irresistible.

The restroom hallway was quiet compared to the ball-room chaos. Music thumped faintly through the walls as I slipped inside the empty men's room and locked myself into the largest stall.

Then I sat down on the closed toilet lid and removed my heels again.

My feet ached beautifully.

Two minutes later, the restroom door opened.

Dan entered cautiously.

When he spotted my shoes outside the stall, he exhaled shakily.

I opened the door slightly and crooked one finger at him.

"Get in here."

He obeyed immediately. The stall suddenly felt very small with both of us inside it. Dan shut the door behind him, staring at me with a mixture of disbelief and need.

I sat there barefoot, skirt high on my thighs, looking up at him through lowered lashes.

“Well?” I asked softly.

That was all it took. He dropped to his knees instantly. I felt heat rush through me at the sight of it.

Dan didn’t even need instructions anymore. He reached for my foot carefully, reverently almost, and pressed kisses along my toes while his eyes fluttered shut.

The sensation sent sparks racing up my legs.

“Oh God,” I whispered.

He looked up briefly, checking my expression, then continued more eagerly. His hands wrapped around my ankle while he kissed and worshipped every inch of my foot like he’d been starving for it.

And maybe he had.

I leaned back against the stall wall, breathing harder now. Dan’s restraint was completely gone. He looked intoxicated by me. By my feet. By the fact that this was finally happening.

I slid one leg wider unconsciously, watching his eyes flick upward for the briefest second before he forced himself to focus again.

“Don’t stop,” I murmured.

That nearly destroyed him.

His shoulders shuddered slightly as he obeyed, kissing my arch again while I tangled one hand in his hair.

The entire moment felt surreal.

The muffled wedding music outside.

The smell of cigarette smoke still clinging to my skin.

My sister's husband kneeling between my legs in a locked bathroom stall.

Every part of it was reckless and electric and dangerously addictive.

Finally I pulled my foot gently away.

Dan looked up immediately, dazed.

"Other one," I whispered.

He obeyed without hesitation.

I watched him carefully this time, fascinated by how completely absorbed he became. Nothing else existed for him in those moments except pleasing me.

That level of devotion was almost overwhelming.

And honestly?

Powerfully arousing.

When I finally decided I'd had enough, I lowered both feet to the floor slowly.

Dan remained kneeling there, breathing unevenly.

I tilted his chin upward lightly with my toe.

“You know what’s going to happen later tonight?” I asked.

His eyes stayed fixed on mine.

“You’re going home with Peg.”

A flicker of guilt crossed his face.

Good.

“And when you’re lying beside her,” I continued softly, “I want you thinking about this.”

Dan closed his eyes briefly.

“Holly...”

“You’ll remember exactly how my feet felt,” I whispered. “Exactly how badly you wanted me.”

The look on his face nearly made me shiver again.

I slipped my heels back on slowly, towering over him once more. Then I opened the stall door.

“Come on,” I said lightly. “Before somebody starts asking questions.”

Dan stood shakily. For one dangerous second we simply stared at each other.

Then I smiled.

And walked back toward the wedding reception, my heels clicking sharply against the marble floor while Dan

followed several steps behind me, completely ruined for the rest of the night.

Chapter Three

Red Lacquer

Pedicure Heaven sat half a block off Rodeo Drive behind a white stone façade and a row of clipped olive trees, discreet enough to suggest old money and expensive enough to make discretion feel like part of the price. Inside, the salon seemed determined to erase the outside world. The air held the cool drift of citrus water, the faint sweetness of gardenia, and beneath it all the polished, almost ceremonial scent of oils, acetone, and warm towels. Crystal pendants trembled under recessed light. Marble glowed. Voices stayed low, as though everyone had agreed that the real luxury wasn't beauty, but privacy.

Holly paused just inside the entrance and handed over her sunglasses with a smile that always worked.

It worked now.

The receptionist straightened instantly. "Welcome back, Miss Holly."

Holly let her gaze travel idly over the room while the woman confirmed her appointment. She knew what she looked like in the salon's mirrored walls: gold hair falling loose over one bare shoulder, lips glossy but not overdone, her tiny cream miniskirt skimming the tops of her thighs, heels making her legs look even longer than they already were. She had dressed for effect, and not only because Beverly Hills practically demanded theater. In places like this, attention was currency, and Holly had long ago learned how to spend it without ever seeming to count.

Her boyfriend covered the bills, of course. He liked the idea of her being maintained in impossible places by impossible people. It gratified something in him to say *my girlfriend goes to Pedicure Heaven* in the same tone other men reserved for vintage cars and private clubs. He never asked what made her insist on this salon in particular. He certainly never asked why she came every week without fail.

That was part of the arrangement too, though he didn't know it.

The waiting lounge curved around a low glass table set with impossible magazines—thick matte covers, women in diamonds looking bored on yachts. Holly sank onto a velvet chair and crossed one leg over the other with the slow precision of someone placing a final piece in a display window. Her skirt climbed a little higher. Not enough to be vulgar. Just enough to make restraint feel like an active decision.

The room noticed.

Two women around her age, both in immaculate ath-leisure and loud enough perfume to announce insecurity before they spoke, glanced over from the espresso bar. One of them looked Holly up and down, then smiled at her friend in a way that was meant to exclude. Holly smiled back, warmer than necessary, which always unsettled women like that; they preferred rivalry when it remained unacknowledged.

Across from her sat three older women in pale silk and heavy jewelry, their handbags arranged with military care. One pretended to read. Another studied the room through half-lowered lashes. The third—elegant, silver-blonde, and wearing enough understated diamonds to finance a small coup—did not bother pretending at all.

Her gaze went to Holly's crossed legs, then to the slim line of Holly's ankle, then to the open sandal that framed her foot like a deliberate invitation.

Holly noticed because Holly always noticed.

She bent to adjust the strap, slowly, fingertips brushing her skin. It was a small motion, almost absent-minded, but when she straightened again, the silver-blond woman was still looking.

Interesting.

A server glided past with a tray. Holly accepted sparkling water and took a single sip. Then she felt movement in her periphery. The silver-blond woman had risen.

Up close, she was even more striking—somewhere in her fifties, maybe, though money and discipline had made age into a matter of styling rather than time. Her suit was ivory. Her perfume was subtle and expensive. Her smile held the confidence of someone unused to being refused.

“You should be very careful in this place,” she said lightly.

Holly tilted her head. “About what?”

“About causing a commotion before noon.”

The woman's eyes flicked once more toward Holly's legs, her shoes, her face. It was frank enough to be almost charming.

Holly laughed softly. "I'd hate to ruin everyone's morning."

"I doubt that." The woman extended a hand with a diamond the size of a problem. "Vivian."

"Holly."

"Lovely name." Vivian's glance dropped again, amused now. "And excellent taste. Though if you're going to keep wearing shoes that do that to your feet, I may have to take you shopping myself."

"Maybe," Holly said.

She let the word hang a moment, then reached out and gave Vivian's thigh the briefest, most playful squeeze as she shifted in her seat. A touch so light it could almost be denied. Vivian's expression changed by less than a breath, but Holly saw it—the tiny hitch, the spark behind the polished ease.

"Maybe," Holly repeated, smiling up at her over the rim of her glass.

Before Vivian could answer, a voice drifted from the far hallway, soft and musical.

“Holly?”

Ming stood beneath the archway in a fitted black uniform that made her look less like a technician and more like a secret somebody paid dearly to keep. She was petite, graceful, and impossibly composed, with dark hair pinned at the nape of her neck and a face that always seemed on the verge of a private smile. She couldn't have been more than twenty-three. The salon lights caught at the smooth line of her cheekbones.

“Holly, come with me.”

Holly rose, feeling the room react to the simple fact of being chosen. It was ridiculous, probably, to imagine the lounge growing quieter, but it did. She slipped her sunglasses back on, though she didn't need them indoors, and followed Ming through the salon's main floor.

If the waiting room was a stage, the treatment area was a dream in sections: row after row of gleaming stations, white basins filled with steaming water, chrome carts shining with tools aligned like instruments before a performance. Women reclined in upholstered chairs while technicians moved around them with exquisite concentration. Creams were smoothed over calves. Towels were folded open with a whisper. Bottles of lacquer flashed every pos-

sible shade of confidence and regret. Everywhere, feet—elegant, tired, pampered, painted, lifted into the light as though each one deserved its own portrait.

Holly was not naïve about beauty rituals. She knew how much labor went into effortless appearances, how many hands shaped the final illusion. But there was still something almost unreal about Pedicure Heaven's choreography, something lush and faintly decadent in the sight of so many women being attended to with such reverence.

Ming glanced back at her, as if she knew exactly what Holly was seeing.

"Busy today," Holly murmured.

Ming's mouth curved. "You like to watch."

"Maybe I like to be reminded I have excellent instincts."

"That too."

They reached the back corridor, where sound softened, and the air grew warmer. Ming opened the door to a private room Holly knew well but still felt, every time, like crossing a threshold she wasn't entirely supposed to cross.

The room was smaller than the main salon but far more intimate. No marble spectacle here. Just cream walls, dimmable sconces, a massage table draped in white, a lacquer cabinet, a silver bowl steaming gently on a side tray, and

shelves lined with oils in amber glass. A vase of white orchids stood by the mirror. Someone had cracked the window enough to let in a breath of jasmine from the courtyard below.

Ming closed the door behind them.

"You can undress and put on the smock," she said. "I'll be right back."

Holly nodded. Alone, she slipped off her shoes first and set them neatly side by side. Then came the jewelry, the miniskirt, the fitted top. The room's quiet pressed close, luxurious and conspiratorial. She tied the salon smock around herself and climbed onto the table, lying back with one knee bent, the cotton cool against her skin.

By the time Ming returned carrying a tray of tools and bottles, Holly had settled into that bright, suspended anticipation she never admitted to anywhere else.

Ming placed the tray down and folded a towel over Holly's shins. "Comfortable?"

"Mmm." Holly opened one eye. "You always ask as if I would tell you no."

"You would," Ming said. "That's why I ask."

There was no flirtation in the words. Or maybe there was, disguised so perfectly as professionalism that it became more dangerous for being deniable.

Ming poured warm oil into her palms and took Holly's foot in both hands.

The first touch was always a surprise, despite how often Holly came here. Ming's hands were deft and firm, not hesitant, never ornamental. She worked the oil slowly over Holly's arch, heel, and ankle, smoothing tension into heat. Holly exhaled and felt the whole week loosen in increments she hadn't known she was carrying—her irritation, her boredom, the shallow performances demanded by expensive lunches and smug men and too many rooms where everyone lied beautifully.

Ming's thumbs pressed into a point just beneath the ball of her foot and a shiver ran all the way up Holly's spine.

"There," Ming said softly.

"You do that on purpose."

"Yes."

Holly laughed under her breath. "At least you're honest."

Ming only went on, one foot and then the other, oil turning Holly's skin luminous under the low light. The

massage was so precise it felt almost uncanny, as though Ming could read her moods through tendon and pulse. Holly closed her eyes for a moment and let sensation gather without naming it. Warmth. Pressure. Relief. Something sharper folded through it, too—an awareness less innocent than relaxation and more complicated than desire.

When she opened her eyes again, Ming was already preparing the pedicure.

The routine should have been ordinary. In Ming's hands, it never was. She worked with exquisite attention: softening the skin, buffing away roughness, trimming cuticles with patient care, shaping each nail until Holly's feet looked less groomed than composed. The concentration on Ming's face gave the task the gravity of art. Holly watched her the way some people watched dancers or calligraphers—drawn not only to the finished beauty but to the discipline that made it possible.

"What color?" Ming asked, though they both knew.

"You tell me."

Ming lifted a bottle from the tray and turned it so the red winked in the light: rich, deep, unapologetic. Not crimson exactly. Darker. Like lacquered cherries. Like old movie exits and very new trouble.

“Your usual,” Ming said.

Holly smiled. “My favorite accusation.”

Ming painted the first stroke with a steadiness that made Holly’s breath catch for no sensible reason. One by one the color bloomed over her toes, vivid against her skin.

“We should double-date sometime,” Holly said lazily, watching Ming work. “You and me. Pick the most impossible men in Los Angeles. Sit them across from each other and say almost nothing.”

Ming did not look up. “Cruel.”

“Effective.”

“They would talk too much.”

“They always do.”

“And then?”

Holly’s smile turned slow. “They’d do anything for us.”

This time Ming glanced up. Their eyes met for a moment too long.

“Perhaps,” Ming said.

The last coat gleamed wetly in the dim room. Ming set the bottle aside and fanned Holly’s toes with a practiced hand, the ghost of amusement still lingering at the corner of her mouth. Then she moved to the light switch and looked back over her shoulder.

“Do you want your usual treatment?”

There it was. Simple as that. No drama. No persuasion. An offer wrapped in custom and ease, made more dangerous by how familiar it had become.

Holly did not hesitate.

“Yes.”

Ming dimmed the lights until the room softened into gold and shadow. The orchids became pale shapes in the mirror. Traffic noise vanished. Somewhere deeper in the salon, water ran in a distant room and stopped.

“Remove the smock,” Ming said quietly.

Holly’s heart gave one hard beat. Even now, even knowing, even wanting—especially wanting—there remained that thin bright thread of nerves, not from fear but from the enormity of consent, the strange electricity in crossing willingly into a space she would never describe outside these walls.

She untied the smock and let it slide away. The air kissed her skin. She lay back again, looking up at the ceiling while her pulse counted out the silence between them.

A rustle of fabric. The soft click of a hanger. Bare footsteps on the floor.

When Holly turned her head, Ming had stepped out of her uniform as well—not performative, not coy, simply unguarded now in the dim room, her composure somehow more striking for the absence of all official costume. She climbed onto the table with the same easy grace she brought to everything, carrying a small bottle of oil.

“Relax,” Ming murmured.

“That seems unlikely.”

Ming’s smile flashed, brief and devastating. She warmed more oil between her palms, then smoothed it over her own feet before placing them against Holly’s—sole to sole at first, then shifting, pressing, gliding with deliberate pressure.

The sensation was startling. Intimate in a way that had nothing to do with spectacle and everything to do with attention. Their feet moved against each other in slow mirrored lines, pressure building and releasing, tenderness edged with something sharper. At times it almost hurt, not badly, but enough to heighten every nerve. Holly inhaled sharply.

“Too much?” Ming asked.

“No.”

“Tell me if it is.”

“I won’t.”

“I know.”

The answer should have sounded smug. Instead it came out warm, nearly affectionate, and Holly felt it in her chest.

Ming adjusted, kneeling over her without touching anywhere else, all the intensity focused through contact so specific it made the rest of Holly’s body feel suspended. She knew now why she came back. Not because this was reckless, though it was. Not because it felt forbidden, though that too had its charge. She came back because Ming’s attention stripped away performance. With her, Holly could not flirt her way around her own appetite. She could only feel it.

Ming’s voice dropped. “Breathe.”

Holly obeyed before she realized she was obeying.

The pressure shifted again. Ming’s thumbs joined the motion, finding those impossible points along Holly’s arches and insteps, each one sending a bright current through her. Holly let her head fall back, eyes half closed.

“See?” Ming said softly. “So tense.”

“That is your fault.”

“A little.”

Their laughter mingled in the dim room and dissolved just as quickly into quiet. The moment narrowed. Holly could smell jasmine from the window, oil warming on skin, the faint trace of Ming's perfume—clean and subtle and impossible to name. She was acutely aware of Ming's nearness without needing to look, aware of the care inside every measured touch and of the control required to make care feel this exact.

Whatever this was, it lived in suggestion. In restraint. In the charged refusal to explain itself.

Holly turned her face slightly, enough that when Ming leaned closer to adjust her angle, Holly could feel the whisper of her breath near her cheek. That nearly undid her more than anything else.

"You like this," Ming said.

It was not a question.

Holly opened her eyes. "You already know I do."

"Yes." Ming's gaze held hers steadily. "I like hearing you say it."

The honesty of that sent a warm flush through Holly. She swallowed. "I like it."

Ming nodded once, satisfied, and returned to the slow, exacting rhythm that made time feel strange. Holly lost

track of minutes. Maybe there were only seconds, endlessly expanded. Maybe the rest of the world had continued as usual while this room sealed itself off from chronology and consequence alike.

At some point Holly laughed softly for no reason she could have explained. At another point she covered her eyes with one forearm and simply let herself be undone by the luxury of not needing to be dazzling for anyone. Ming did not ask her to speak again. She did not need to.

She came like a sigh.

Eventually, inevitably, the room came back into focus: the low lamplight, the orchids, the gleam of red polish now dry and perfect at the ends of Holly's feet. Ming withdrew first, as gracefully as she had begun, and reached for a warm towel. She wrapped Holly's feet, held them a moment, then let them rest.

Neither woman spoke.

The silence afterward was not awkward. It was expensive, private, and complete.

When Holly finally sat up, she felt softer somehow, though not weaker. If anything, the opposite. Her hair had fallen loose around her shoulders. Ming had already stepped back into part of her uniform, black fabric crisp

again, expression composed, only her eyes giving anything away.

“You should be illegal,” Holly said quietly.

Ming folded the used towel with methodical hands. “This is Beverly Hills. Illegal things usually cost more.”

Holly laughed, the sound low and real. She reached for her clothes and dressed slowly, as if returning piece by piece to a role she wore well but no longer mistook for skin. The miniskirt slid back into place. The top. The jewelry. Finally the shoes, which framed her newly polished feet like punctuation.

At the counter in the private room sat a slim leather folder with the invoice inside. Outrageous, as always. Holly didn’t bother reading it. She tucked in the black card her boyfriend had told her to use “for whatever they recommend,” then opened her bag and drew out a crisp stack of hundreds.

Ming looked at the money, then at Holly.

“A thousand?” she asked.

“Courtesy of a man who thinks he knows what he’s paying for.”

Ming’s expression shifted, amused despite herself. “Dangerous thing to say out loud.”

“We’re alone.”

“For now.”

Holly placed the bills into Ming’s hand and curled Ming’s fingers closed over them. “Same time next week?”

For the first time all afternoon, Ming looked almost flustered. It lasted less than a second, but Holly treasured it immediately.

“Yes,” Ming said. “Same time next week.”

When Holly stepped back through the salon, the chandeliers seemed brighter, the marble colder, the ordinary performances of beauty resuming around her as if she had never left them. Yet the room noticed her again. Of course it did. Vivian was still there near the front, now standing with her phone in one hand and her handbag in the other, speaking to no one. She looked up as Holly approached.

“Well,” Vivian said, her gaze dipping briefly to Holly’s feet. “That looks worth waiting for.”

Holly smiled. “Most good things are.”

Vivian’s brows lifted, appreciating the answer and perhaps the challenge inside it. “About that shopping trip.”

Holly slid her sunglasses on and paused close enough for the older woman to catch the jasmine still clinging faintly to her skin.

“Maybe,” she said once more, but she grabbed a card off the front desk and scribbled her phone number on it. She handed the card to Vivian, who slipped it into her bag with a wink.

Then she walked out into the Beverly Hills sun on blood-red toes and impossible heels, leaving behind the scent of money, lacquer, and secrets—carrying with her the kind of calm that only comes from getting exactly what you wanted and knowing, with absolute certainty, that next week you would want it again.

Chapter Four

The Smell of Power

I knew exactly what Carl was up to the moment he told me we'd be traveling together to the regional conference. Just the two of us. "To go over some performance issues," he'd said, his eyes already dropping to my heels before he caught himself. The man is so transparent it's almost sad.

I'd dressed for the occasion. Tiny black miniskirt riding high on my thighs, black pantyhose stretched tight over every curve, five-inch pumps that made my calves look incredible, and a top that was two sizes too small, cleavage spilling out like an invitation I never intended to honor.

His hotel room door opened after a single knock. Carl stood there in his cheap suit, already sweating despite the AC blasting. "Holly. Come in. We need to talk about your numbers this quarter."

I walked past him, letting my hips sway just enough to make him swallow hard. The room was standard business-class—king bed, desk, armchair by the window. I didn't sit where he expected. Instead, I lowered myself into the armchair, crossing my legs slowly, letting the nylon whisper against itself.

He cleared his throat. "Look, your sales figures are abysmal. I'm supposed to write you up, maybe even recommend termination." He was pacing now, trying to sound authoritative. "But I'm not an unreasonable man. If you show some... appreciation for my leniency, I might be able to smooth things over."

I let the silence sit. Ten seconds. Twenty. His pacing stopped. He looked at me, waiting for the groveling he expected.

I pulled a cigarette from my purse, lit it, and took a long drag.

"Smoking isn't allowed in here," he said weakly.

I exhaled a cloud of smoke toward him. "Who gives a fuck? I'm not paying the five-hundred-dollar cleaning fee. You are, you worm."

His mouth opened and closed. No sound came out.

I took another drag, watching him squirm. Slowly, I uncrossed my legs and then crossed them again, this time letting the movement draw his gaze. His eyes dropped to my shoes, to the arch of my foot suspended in its heel. He couldn't help himself. He stared.

I let the shoe dangle off my toes. The black nylon caught the light. He swallowed. Still, he said nothing.

"Look, I think we both know what you want," I said, my voice flat.

"Yeah?" He tried for tough, but it came out breathy.

"You want to sniff me under these pantyhose, don't you?" I watched his face go pale, then red. "I didn't shower for two days because I knew you were going to pull some lame shit like this. I knew you'd want to smell my odors. You crave them, don't you?"

He was shaking his head, trying to deny it, but sweat was beading on his forehead. His cock was already tenting his trousers.

"Get on your knees."

He hesitated for a heartbeat. Then he dropped.

I stood up, walked over to him, and pressed my crotch directly into his face. The nylon was warm from my body, damp from two days of not washing.

"Smell it, worm. Smell my stink."

His breath hitched. Then he inhaled—deep, shuddering. His hands came up to grip my thighs, but I slapped them away.

"Don't touch me. Just smell."

He pressed his nose into the fabric, inhaling again and again. A low moan escaped his throat. His hand dropped to his own crotch, starting to rub himself through his pants.

"No," I said. "Keep your hands at your sides."

He obeyed, but his hips started grinding into the air.

I turned around, presenting my ass to him. "Now sniff my butt."

He leaned forward, his face buried between my nylon-covered cheeks. I felt his nose push against the fabric right over my ass. He was whimpering.

I let him have a moment. Then I clenched, and a loud, wet fart ripped out of me, hitting him directly in the face.

He moaned like it was the most beautiful sound in the world. He was straining painfully against his trousers.

I walked to the bed and sat down on the edge, leaning back on my hands. I could feel what and wetness radiating up from under me. "You can take of yourself now, if you like."

He didn't need to be told twice. He fumbled with his belt and went to work on himself. His eyes locked on the reinforced nylon crotch of the pantyhose that I was giving a good look at.

I lit another cigarette, taking a slow drag as I watched him degrade himself. He was a mess—sweating, panting. His eyes were glued to my crotch and the smoke curling from my lips.

He finished in a messy, loud way.

I pointed at it with my cigarette. "Lick it up."

He complied, disgusted but craving every second of his humiliation.

I stood, smoothed down my skirt, and walked to the door. I paused with my hand on the knob and looked back at him, still kneeling, still panting.

"If you're a good boy, maybe we'll do this again."

Chapter Five

Snowed In

The cabin was gorgeous—three stories of timber and glass overlooking a pristine white mountainside. Fire crackling, snow falling, the whole holiday postcard scene. Too bad my back felt like someone had used it for sled practice.

I'd wiped out hard on the black diamond. Double black, technically, but I didn't need to admit that to anyone. Now I was stuck on the couch with a heating pad while everyone else hit the afternoon slopes. Mom, Dad, my sister Jenna, her husband Mark, the twins—all gone. Leaving me with the one person who'd rather be anywhere else.

Brad.

He was sprawled in the armchair across from me, phone in hand, thumbs flying across the screen. Twenty years

old, Jenna's stepson, and currently nursing the kind of heartbreak that only a college breakup can deliver. Cindy. His girlfriend. Ex-girlfriend. Whatever she was now. She'd stormed out last night after screaming something about him not caring about her feelings, slamming the cabin door hard enough to rattle the antler chandelier.

The whole family had pretended not to hear. We were good at that.

"You okay over there?" I asked.

"Fine." He didn't look up.

"You know, Cindy's—"

"I'm fine."

I watched him for a moment. He was good-looking, honestly. Six feet, broad shoulders, sandy hair that fell over his forehead. He had that boyish thing going on, but his jaw was sharpening into something more adult. He just didn't know it yet. He was trying so hard to be tough, to be the kind of guy who shrugged off a fight and moved on. It wasn't him. The real him was the kid who'd helped me carry groceries in without being asked, who'd made sure his little cousins got the good cookies first.

And right now, the real him was hurting.

I stretched, wincing as my back protested. "You know, I could really use some—"

"Can't. In a match." His thumbs never stopped moving.

I sighed. Horny. Bored. Stuck in a cabin with a heart-broken boy who wouldn't look at me. Never a good combination.

An idea started forming. A terrible, wonderful idea.

I got up slowly, gripping the arm of the couch for support. "I'm going upstairs to the bathroom. If I'm not down in twenty minutes, send a search party."

He grunted.

I climbed the stairs one at a time, my lower back aching with each step. The master bathroom was ridiculous—huge soaking tub, rainfall shower, heated floors. I stripped down to my black bra and matching panties, letting my hair fall loose from its ponytail. I looked at myself in the mirror. Twenty-six, still tight, still curvy in all the right places. My D-cups strained against the lace. My legs went on forever.

I called down the stairs. "Brad! Can you come up here?"

Footsteps. Hesitant. Then faster. He appeared in the doorway, phone still in hand, and stopped dead.

His eyes went wide. He tried to look at my face, but they kept dropping—to my cleavage, to the curve of my hips, to my long bare legs.

"Whoa. Sorry. I mean—what's up?"

I put on my best embarrassed smile. "I'm sorry, really sorry. I'm super embarrassed. But can you help me shave my legs? I hurt my back, and I can't bend over."

His mouth opened. Closed. Opened again. "Uh. Okay."

I stepped into the massive shower stall, turned on the water, and let it run warm over my legs. I grabbed the shaving cream and lathered up, thick white foam covering my calves, my knees, my thighs. I handed him a pink razor.

"It's like shaving your face, if your face was three feet long." I grinned.

He laughed nervously and took the razor. He knelt beside the shower, reached in, and started shaving. His hand was shaking slightly.

I watched him work. He was careful, meticulous, his brow furrowed in concentration. Then—

I pulled my leg back. A thin line of blood welled up on my shin.

"Oh shit, I'm sorry!" He looked horrified.

I laughed. "It's fine. Kiss it to make it better?"

He stared at me. Then, slowly, he leaned in and pressed his lips to the tiny cut. His mouth was warm. He lingered a second longer than necessary, then pulled back, his face bright red.

I could see it. The bulge in his sweatpants. He tried to shift, to hide it, but there was no mistaking it.

He kept shaving, working his way up my thighs. Higher. Higher. He got to the top of my thigh, where my panties met my skin, and stopped.

"Oh, come on," I said. "We're both adults. Shave all the way up. I hate the way they look when they poke out of my panties. I won't tell anyone."

He swallowed hard. "Holly, I don't think—"

"I'll make it easier." I hoisted my leg up, planting my foot on the shower bench, opening myself to him. My panties stretched.

"You have to put your hand on my pussy to hold it steady," I said.

His hand trembled as he shaved the very edge of my panty line.

"Is Cindy shaved?" I asked.

He nodded, his voice barely a whisper. "Yeah."

"Do you like the natural look?"

He couldn't answer. His hand was still on me, warm and steady. I was enjoying myself.

He finished the last few strokes, rinsing the razor. "Done."

"Thanks." I turned the water on full, rinsing the foam away. When I looked back, he was standing, trying to hide the bulge.

"You know," I said, stepping out of the shower, water dripping down my body, "I don't like the way Cindy treats you. You can do better."

"I dunno," he started to say...

"No, you do know," I replied. "You just don't have the words for it. Did you enjoy what you just did?" He nodded. "Did you ever feel that turned on by Cindy? Be honest." He shook his head. "That's what it should feel like with a woman you're really attracted to. Remember that."

I think he was starting to get the message.

Chapter Six

The Boutique

I knew Vivian was going to call me.

Not because she'd said she would.

Women like Vivian never needed to say things directly.

They simply allowed events to happen around them as if the universe itself had received instructions.

Three days earlier, I'd met her at an absurdly expensive pedicure salon in Beverly Hills—a place where cucumber water probably cost twenty dollars and every woman looked like she either owned a production company or had divorced someone who did.

Vivian had sat two chairs away from me while we both had our feet done.

At first glance, she looked elegant.

At second glance, terrifyingly wealthy.

Not flashy wealthy.

Real wealthy.

The kind where every piece of jewelry is understated specifically because it's worth a fortune.

She wore diamond earrings that caught the light only when she turned her head just right. A platinum bracelet rested casually against her wrist. Her cream silk blouse probably cost more than my monthly rent.

And she kept looking at me.

Not rudely.

Appreciatively.

Especially when the technician massaged lotion into my feet.

I noticed.

Of course I noticed.

I always noticed.

"You have beautiful posture," she'd said at one point in that smooth, low voice of hers.

"That's a classy way of saying I know how to wear heels," I replied.

Her smile deepened slightly.

"Yes," she said. "I imagine you do."

That little exchange should have ended there.

Instead, somehow, she'd ended up offering to take me shoe shopping.

Shoe shopping.

Like that was a perfectly normal thing for strangers to do together.

I'd laughed and told her maybe.

But when my phone rang Thursday morning and a private Beverly Hills number appeared on the screen, I smiled before I even answered.

"Holly speaking."

"Holly, darling," Vivian said warmly. "I hope I'm not interrupting your morning."

The woman sounded like old champagne tastes.

"Depends," I said, leaning against my kitchen counter.

"Should I be nervous?"

She laughed softly.

"No. Curious, perhaps."

That alone made my pulse jump a little.

"I wondered if you might join me for lunch tomorrow."

There was a pause after she said it.

Not awkward.

Intentional.

Vivian used silence the way other women used eyeliner.

“Well,” I said slowly, “where exactly are we going?”

“Oh, nowhere dramatic. Just a little place in Beverly Hills.”

Translation: somewhere impossible.

I twirled my hair around one finger.

“And if I say no?”

“I don’t think you will.”

God.

The confidence.

I smiled despite myself.

“One o’clock?”

“Perfect,” she replied immediately.

Then she hung up.

No unnecessary chatter.

No confirming details.

The woman moved through life like she owned it.

And somehow, against my better judgment, I was excited.

The next afternoon I stood in front of my mirror trying to decide exactly how dangerous I wanted to look.

There’s an art to dressing sexy for wealthy people.

Too obvious and you look cheap.

Too conservative and you disappear.

I settled on what I privately called classy slut.

Cream satin blouse.

Black pencil skirt slit just enough to suggest trouble.

Gold ankle bracelet.

Red lipstick.

Hair in loose blonde waves.

And heels sharp enough to ruin marriages.

Perfect.

When I arrived at the restaurant fifteen minutes late—strategically late—the maître d’ greeted me like visiting royalty.

“Miss Holly. Ms. Ashcombe is expecting you.”

Of course she was.

The restaurant looked less like a dining room and more like a private club for people who considered yachts a personality trait. Crystal chandeliers glowed overhead. Waiters floated silently between tables. Somewhere nearby, someone important laughed too loudly.

And there was Vivian.

I actually stopped for half a second.

She looked incredible.

Black silk dress.

Simple diamond necklace.

Silver-blond hair swept elegantly back.

Everything understated.

Everything devastating.

Women my age tried too hard to be sexy.

Vivian didn't try at all.

She simply existed beautifully.

She stood when she saw me.

"You're even lovelier than I remembered."

I kissed her cheek lightly.

"You say that like you've been thinking about me."

"I have."

She said it so calmly that it sent a little shiver through me.

Interesting.

Lunch unfolded like some luxurious fever dream.

Champagne arrived without us ordering it.

Tiny perfect courses appeared one after another.

White truffle pasta.

Caviar.

Wine that tasted expensive enough to alter tax brackets.

And through it all, Vivian focused on me with this quiet, unsettling attention.

Not predatory.

Not exactly romantic.

Something else.

“So tell me,” she asked at one point, swirling wine gently in her glass, “do you always enjoy being admired?”

I smiled.

“That depends who’s admiring me.”

“And if the admirer is sincere?”

“Oh, sincerity’s dangerous.”

Her eyes glittered at that.

Then, midway through lunch, she placed her hand gently over mine.

The touch barely lasted a second.

But I felt it instantly.

Warm skin.

Perfect nails.

A strange little current under my skin.

“I like you,” she said quietly.

I looked down at our hands.

For one bizarre moment, I wondered if Vivian wanted me.

Actually wanted me.

Not as decoration.

Not as entertainment.

Something more intimate than that.

I couldn't quite tell.

And honestly, that uncertainty made the moment even more thrilling.

After lunch, Vivian led me down Rodeo Drive toward a discreet building with no sign outside.

Just a polished brass door.

A man in a tailored suit opened it immediately.

"Good afternoon, Ms. Ashcombe."

Inside, I nearly forgot how to breathe.

The boutique wasn't a store.

It was a cathedral dedicated to shoes.

Soft lighting glowed against polished wood and Italian leather. Every pair on display looked handcrafted by emotionally unavailable Renaissance angels.

A woman dressed entirely in black silk approached us gracefully.

"Welcome back, Vivian."

Then she turned toward me and smiled knowingly.

"And welcome, Miss Holly. We've been expecting you."

I blinked.

"Excuse me?"

Vivian just accepted a flute of Dom Pérignon from another attendant as casually as someone accepting tap water.

The staff kissed her cheeks like family greeting nobility.
I suddenly felt wildly out of my depth.

One of the attendants disappeared into the back room and returned carrying a magnificent wooden box.

Dark walnut.

Hand-carved.

Brass hinges.

The box alone probably cost more than my first car.

They opened it carefully.

Inside sat the most beautiful shoes I had ever seen.

Black satin stilettos.

Six-inch heels.

Elegant gold detailing twisting along the arch.

They looked less like shoes and more like weapons designed by fashion gods.

“Try them on, my dear,” Vivian said softly.

I sat slowly while one of the attendants removed my heels.

Then I slipped my feet into the stilettos.

Perfect.

Not close.

Perfect.

Like they'd been designed specifically for me.

Which, horrifyingly, they probably had.

I stood and took a few careful steps across the boutique floor.

Every instinct inside me came alive instantly.

Power.

Grace.

Danger.

I caught Vivian watching me with unmistakable satisfaction.

"How do they feel?" she asked.

I exhaled slowly.

"Illegal."

She laughed softly.

"We'll take them."

Just like that.

No discussion.

No visible transaction.

The shoes simply became mine.

And that was the moment my excitement finally collided with suspicion.

Nobody gave away shoes like these for free.

Not rich women.

Not anyone.

As the valet brought Vivian's Mercedes around, she handed me a cream-colored envelope embossed with gold lettering.

"Join us tonight," she said.

I opened it.

Bel Air address.

Cocktails at eight.

"Us?" I asked carefully.

"My husband Alfred is eager to meet you."

Ah.

There it was.

I looked at her cautiously.

"Vivian... I think maybe you misunderstood me."

She frowned slightly.

"My dear?"

"I'm not..." I hesitated delicately. "Professionally available."

Understanding crossed her face immediately.

Then amusement.

"Oh heavens, no," she said warmly. "Nothing like that."

Relief mixed instantly with confusion.

“Then what exactly is this?”

She stepped closer.

Close enough for me to smell her perfume.

Jasmine and something darker underneath.

“A cocktail party,” she said softly. “And perhaps a little entertainment.”

Before I could answer, she kissed me lightly on the lips.

Quick.

Elegant.

Enough to leave me stunned.

Then she turned and slid into the waiting Mercedes.

“I do hope you’ll come.”

And just like that, she disappeared into Beverly Hills traffic.

The house in Bel Air looked like the sort of place dictators get overthrown in.

Massive iron gates.

Endless driveway.

Fountains glowing gold in the evening light.

The mansion itself rose above the hillside like a luxury hotel pretending to be a private residence.

I suddenly became very aware I grew up sharing a bathroom with two siblings.

A tuxedoed footman opened the door before I knocked.

Inside, the entrance hall soared upward beneath massive chandeliers. Marble floors gleamed beneath my heels. A sweeping staircase curved elegantly toward the second floor.

The air smelled faintly of orchids and old money.

Vivian descended the staircase smiling.

“Holly. You came.”

Tonight she wore black silk and diamonds.

Simple.

Lethal.

“You didn’t mention you lived in Versailles,” I said.

“This old thing?” she replied lightly, linking her arm through mine.

The living room contained maybe a dozen guests.

All older.

All rich.

Every woman looked polished enough to intimidate a federal prosecutor.

And then I saw Alfred.

Alfred Van Platten.

Even I knew the name.

Billionaire real estate mogul.

Owner of half the Los Angeles skyline.

And somehow absurdly handsome for a man his age.

Silver hair.

Perfect tuxedo.

Warm, intelligent eyes.

The kind of older man who made younger women suddenly understand why therapy exists.

“Alfred,” Vivian said smoothly, “this is Holly.”

He turned toward me.

And for one brief second, genuine surprise crossed his face.

Then delight.

“My God,” he murmured. “Vivian undersold you.”

I smiled.

“That’s dangerous. I’ll become impossible.”

He laughed warmly.

“I suspect you already are.”

We talked for several minutes.

Art.

Travel.

Fashion.

And all the while I noticed his gaze occasionally drifting downward toward my shoes.

Not crudely.

Admiringly.

Like a collector studying something rare.

Eventually another guest pulled him away, and I spent the next half hour floating through conversations with billionaires and women who probably chaired charity galas for fun.

Then Vivian touched my elbow gently.

“Come with me.”

Something in her tone made my pulse jump.

We went upstairs.

Down a quieter hallway.

Into a softly lit private sitting room.

Alfred waited there alone.

And in the center of the room stood a small pedestal.

I stopped walking.

Oh.

Oh, I thought.

Now I understand.

Vivian gestured gracefully toward the pedestal.

“Would you mind, darling?”

I should have been offended.

Objectified.

Instead, to my own surprise, I felt powerful.

I stepped onto the pedestal slowly, crossing one ankle over the other.

The satin stilettos gleamed beneath the warm amber light.

Alfred sat perfectly still, looking at me.

Or rather—

Looking at the shoes on my feet.

The room fell completely silent.

And suddenly I realized this wasn't vulgar at all.

It was intimate.

Private.

Almost oddly sweet.

Alfred admired beautiful footwear the way art lovers admired paintings.

With reverence.

I shifted my foot slightly.

His breathing changed.

Vivian noticed immediately.

"Are you reacting, my dear?" she asked softly.

Alfred nodded once.

“Splendid,” Vivian replied.

And right then, I understood exactly who controlled this room.

Not the billionaire.

Vivian.

Elegant, composed Vivian orchestrated everything effortlessly.

The atmosphere.

The fantasy.

Even her husband.

Alfred rose slowly from his chair and approached me.

Despite all his money and power, there was something unexpectedly vulnerable about him now.

He stopped in front of me.

“May I?” he asked quietly.

I looked down at this billionaire asking permission from me.

Something inside me thrilled at the irony.

“Yes,” I said softly.

He knelt.

Naturally.

Gracefully.

Like a knight before a queen.

Then he bent and kissed the tip of one satin-covered shoe.

The tenderness of it startled me.

There was nothing degrading about the moment.

Nothing ugly.

Just admiration.

Fantasy.

Affection transformed into ritual.

And suddenly I understood all of it.

This wasn't about sex.

It was about beauty.

Escape.

Desire made elegant.

Alfred stood again, smiling faintly.

"Thank you," he said sincerely.

Then he quietly left the room.

Leaving me alone with Vivian.

For a moment, neither of us spoke.

Then she smiled.

"You were marvelous."

I laughed softly.

"What exactly just happened?"

"Marriage," she replied dryly.

I burst out laughing.

Real laughter.

And Vivian laughed with me.

The tension dissolved instantly.

Outside, the night air felt cool against my skin as the footman retrieved my car.

The mansion glowed behind us beneath the Bel Air hills.

Vivian took both my hands gently in hers.

“Thank you,” she said quietly. “You made tonight very special.”

I searched her face.

“So that’s it? You buy beautiful women shoes and parade them in front of your husband?”

“When you phrase it that way,” she said, laughing softly, “I sound criminal.”

“A little.”

She smiled.

Then her expression softened.

“Alfred adores beautiful things,” she admitted. “Especially beautiful women. And I prefer he admire them safely.”

Everything clicked completely into place.

“He needs a little inspiration now and then,” she continued. “I give him someone dazzling to worship for an evening.” Her lips curved slightly. “And afterward, he remembers he still has me.”

I shook my head in amazement.

“This is the most expensive foreplay in human history.”

Vivian grinned.

“You have no idea.”

We stood there smiling beneath the fountain lights.

Then she leaned close enough for her lips to brush my ear.

“I’m going to get laid tonight,” she whispered conspiratorially.

I laughed so hard I nearly stumbled in my six-inch heels.

Vivian laughed too.

And suddenly, beneath all the diamonds and elegance and impossible wealth, I saw her clearly.

Not just a billionaire’s wife.

Not just a society queen.

Just a woman still gloriously alive.

She squeezed my hands gently.

“We’ll do this again.”

Not a question.

A promise.

Then she kissed my cheek and disappeared back into the glowing mansion.

I stood there for a moment before getting into my car, looking down at the impossible stilettos on my feet.

Twenty-five-thousand-dollar shoes.

Gifted by strangers.

Or maybe not strangers anymore.

I smiled to myself as I slid behind the wheel.

Los Angeles was completely insane.

And somehow, I was beginning to love it.

Chapter Seven

Making Trouble at Brunch

The brunch had been dead for at least an hour before I decided to have fun.

You know the kind of brunch I mean. Too much money. Too much linen. Too many people pretending they're relaxed while secretly performing for everyone around them.

The oceanfront club was gorgeous, I'll give it that. White umbrellas. Crystal glasses sweating in the heat. Salt air drifting through the terrace while waves crashed below the cliffs like a soundtrack designed by rich people.

But the company?

Hopeless.

Trevor—my boyfriend, technically—was sitting beside me pretending not to stare at a girl by the pool who looked young enough to call him “sir” without irony. She was wandering around in this tiny white bikini that left absolutely nothing to the imagination, flipping her hair every thirty seconds like she was trying to summon male attention through witchcraft.

Pathetic.

Not because she wasn’t pretty. She was.

But there’s an art to seduction, and girls like that never understand it. They think showing everything is power. It isn’t. Mystery is power. Suggestion is power. Anticipation is power.

Anybody can take their clothes off.

Trevor practically drooled into his mimosa while pretending to listen to the conversation at our table.

I crossed my legs slowly beneath my sundress, letting the hem ride higher along my thighs. My leather sandals wrapped around my ankles in delicate straps, the heels just high enough to force a graceful arch through my feet whenever I moved.

Two men at another table noticed immediately.

Trevor didn’t.

Typical.

Across from us sat another couple Trevor knew through business. The man was handsome in a polished, corporate kind of way. Dark hair. Expensive watch. Good shoulders. The sort of man women trusted because he looked controlled.

The woman beside him hated me instantly.

That happens sometimes.

Certain women can smell trouble before I say a word.

“Oh my God,” she said with a smile sharp enough to cut glass, “your skin is incredible. Do you do Botox?”

There it was.

I smiled sweetly. “No.”

“Really?” she said. “Wow. Lucky.”

Translation: liar.

A few minutes later she tilted her head at me and said, “I love your bangs. Did you cut them yourself?”

Trevor actually snorted into his drink.

I turned toward her slowly.

“That’s such a funny question.”

Her smile tightened immediately.

Good.

I decided then and there to ruin her day.

Not loudly.

Not dramatically.

Just enough.

Her boyfriend's name was Daniel.

I learned this because I started talking to him like nobody else existed.

It's amazing how quickly people reveal themselves when you focus your full attention on them. Most men are starving for it. Most people are, honestly.

"So what do you actually do?" I asked him, leaning slightly closer.

He answered immediately.

I listened.

Really listened.

Asked questions. Held eye contact. Smiled at the right moments. Let him feel interesting.

His whole face changed within minutes.

Men always think seduction starts with touch.

It doesn't.

It starts with attention.

Meanwhile Trevor resumed staring at Bikini Girl near the pool, which honestly made my job easier.

Daniel's girlfriend—Amber, apparently—started stiffening beside him almost immediately.

Good instincts.

"So what would you rather be doing today?" I asked him.

Amber interrupted instantly. "Danny hates sitting still."

Danny.

God.

Daniel gave her a quick automatic glance before turning back toward me.

"I like being near the water," he admitted.

"Me too."

Under the table, I slipped one sandal off.

His eyes flickered downward before he could stop himself.

Interesting.

I flexed my bare foot slowly beneath the tablecloth while continuing the conversation like nothing had happened.

Daniel lost his train of thought mid-sentence.

There it is, I thought.

Perfect.

I slid the sandal halfway back on and let it dangle lazily from my toes.

He looked again.

Poor thing.

Then I let it slip free completely.

Amber noticed him looking this time.

“Danny?” she snapped.

“Hm?”

“I asked if you wanted another drink.”

“Oh. Uh. Sure.”

I almost laughed.

A minute later I brushed my bare foot gently against his ankle beneath the table.

He froze instantly.

Not dramatically.

Just enough.

I kept talking casually about travel and restaurants and terrible networking parties while my foot moved slowly along his leg beneath the tablecloth.

He tried so hard to act normal.

That’s always the funniest part.

Amber leaned toward him sharply. “Hello? I’m over here.”

Daniel blinked like he’d been woken up.

“What?”

“You haven’t listened to a word I’ve said for ten minutes.”

I tilted my head sympathetically.

“That must be frustrating.”

Amber turned toward me fully then.

“Excuse me?”

I smiled at her lazily.

“He doesn’t want to look at you. I don’t really blame him.”

Silence.

Beautiful silence.

Trevor finally looked up from Pool Girl.

Daniel looked like he wanted the earth to swallow him whole.

Amber stared at me in disbelief. “You’re unbelievable.”

“I’ve heard that before.”

Then she turned to Daniel.

“You’re going to let her talk to me like that?”

Poor guy.

He opened his mouth, but nothing came out. You could practically watch his nervous system short-circuiting in real time.

Finally he mumbled, “Uh... sorry. Yeah, honey. Nice day today, right?”

Amber laughed once—a sharp, ugly sound.

“What the fuck ever.”

Then she grabbed her bag and stormed off across the terrace.

I watched her go while sipping champagne.

Daniel sat there in stunned silence.

Then I leaned toward him slightly.

“Oops.”

He almost laughed.

Almost.

“You’re trouble,” he muttered.

“I know.”

Under the table, I rubbed my foot slowly against his calf again.

This time he didn’t pull away.

Instead he exhaled through his nose like a man losing an argument with himself.

“Take a walk with me,” I said.

He hesitated immediately. “She’s already mad at me.”

I tilted my head.

“She’s always going to be mad at you.”

That hit him harder than I expected.

"You know that, right?" I asked softly.

He looked down.

"She's training you," I continued. "Little by little. Teaching you to apologize for existing."

"That's not—"

"It is."

Silence.

Then I smiled faintly.

"Come walk on the beach. I won't bite."

I paused.

"Well. Maybe I will."

He laughed nervously despite himself.

Then he stood up and followed me away from the brunch.

The sand felt warm beneath my feet when I took my sandals off near the shoreline. The ocean breeze lifted the hem of my dress while waves rolled over my ankles in cool white foam.

Daniel tried very hard not to stare at my feet.

He failed constantly.

I could feel it.

Honestly, I liked him more because he tried not to.

There was something sweet about the restraint.

We walked slowly along the waterline while the sounds of the club faded behind us.

“You’re nervous,” I told him.

“You enjoy making people nervous.”

“Yes.”

“At least you’re honest.”

“I’m always honest. People just don’t like hearing things clearly.”

That made him laugh softly.

Then, after a long silence, he surprised me.

“I’m unhappy,” he admitted quietly.

There it is.

“With her?” I asked.

“With myself too, probably.”

Better answer.

I glanced sideways at him while ocean water curled around my feet again.

“You know what your problem is?” I asked.

“What?”

“You spend your entire life performing the version of yourself other people expect.”

He frowned slightly. “You got all that from brunch?”

“I got all that from watching you apologize with your face every thirty seconds.”

That one landed.

He laughed under his breath, but it was uncomfortable because he knew I was right.

“You make me sound pathetic.”

“No,” I said softly. “Just trapped.”

We kept walking until we found a quieter stretch of beach shaded by palm trees. A weathered wooden bench overlooked the ocean there, hidden far enough away that nobody from the club could really see us.

“Sit,” I told him.

We sat with a careful amount of space between us.

For maybe three seconds.

Then I lifted my legs and placed my feet gently in his lap.

He startled immediately.

“Holly—”

“No.”

He blinked.

“I want them there.”

His hands hovered awkwardly near my ankles like he wasn't sure what to do with them.

“You can look,” I said calmly.

Color rose instantly into his face.

“I wasn’t—”

“You were.”

Silence.

Then finally he admitted it.

“Yes.”

There it was again.

Honesty.

I leaned back comfortably against the bench.

“You don’t have to be embarrassed.”

“It’s stupid.”

“No,” I said. “It’s human.”

He looked away toward the water. “Easy for you to say.”

I smiled faintly.

“I know more about men than you think.”

That earned a reluctant smile.

I watched the conflict moving behind his eyes then.

Shame. Curiosity. Relief. Fear.

Like he’d spent years trying to lock away parts of himself because they didn’t match whatever idea of masculinity he’d inherited.

I’d seen it before.

Many times.

“Go ahead,” I said softly.

Slowly, cautiously, he rested his hands against my feet.

Tentative.

Gentle.

Like he expected me to change my mind.

“Mmm,” I murmured approvingly.

His shoulders relaxed almost immediately.

Sand still clung lightly to my skin from the beach, and he brushed it away carefully with his thumbs while the ocean breeze moved through the palms overhead.

“You’re tense,” I told him.

“I wonder why.”

I laughed softly.

His hands moved more confidently now, pressing along my arches, rubbing slow circles into the pads of my heels.

“Oh,” I said, closing my eyes briefly. “You’re actually good at this.”

He smiled then.

A real smile.

Maybe the first real one I’d seen from him all day.

“There,” I said quietly. “That’s the real you.”

“What?”

“You haven’t smiled like that once since I met you.”

He paused.

Realized I was right.

When he looked up at me again, his breath caught slightly.

My dress had shifted.

Just enough.

Not vulgar.

Never vulgar.

But enough to make his thoughts unravel visibly behind his eyes.

“You’re insane,” he whispered.

“Probably.”

The tension between us felt thick now. Salt air. Heat. Desire. The sound of waves moving endlessly behind us.

I watched him carefully.

Then I said quietly, “I want you to think about something.”

He nodded immediately.

“You can choose your life differently.”

He frowned. “What does that mean?”

“It means you don’t have to spend the next twenty years apologizing for who you are.”

His hands stopped moving.

“You really think people can change?”

“Yes.”

“How?”

“They stop lying to themselves.”

The wind stirred through the palm leaves above us.

Daniel looked down at my feet resting in his lap, then at his own hands.

At the strange peace settling over him.

“You make this sound simple,” he said.

“It isn’t simple. It’s a decision.”

He looked at me for a long moment then, like he was trying to figure out whether I was dangerous or honest or maybe both.

Probably both.

Then slowly, almost unconsciously, he lifted one of my feet and pressed a soft kiss against it.

Not frantic.

Not obscene.

Just sincere.

The second he did it, I felt him shiver slightly afterward like something inside him had finally cracked open.

“There,” I whispered. “See?”

He laughed softly under his breath, dazed.

“I should probably feel crazier about this.”

“Do you?”

“No.”

“How do you feel?”

He thought about it.

Then smiled again.

“Relieved.”

Poor guy.

Maybe there was hope for him after all.

Eventually the sunlight began softening toward evening, and reality drifted back in around us.

“We should go,” he said reluctantly.

“Yes.”

We stood.

He looked different now. Straighter somehow. Lighter.

Still uncertain.

But awake.

As we walked back toward the club, I slipped my sandals back on slowly, fastening the delicate straps around my ankles one by one.

Daniel watched every movement.

Of course he did.

Near the terrace entrance, I stopped him gently.

“Go in separately.”

He nodded.

“I’ll come later. No scene.”

“Right.”

For a moment neither of us moved.

Then I smiled faintly.

“Call me.”

He laughed softly. “You assume I will.”

“You will.”

He looked at me for another long second.

“I probably will.”

I stepped closer just long enough for him to catch the scent of my perfume again—jasmine, warm skin, ocean air.

“We only just started,” I said quietly. “There’s a lot of work to do.”

He shook his head, smiling helplessly now.

“You really are trouble.”

I smiled.

“Yes,” I said.

“I know.”

Chapter Eight

At the Conference Table

Dick Harrow loved hearing himself explain things. That was the first thing everyone learned about him at Blackstone & Reed Capital in Beverly Hills. The second thing they learned was that he was almost never as smart as he thought he was.

Unfortunately for the rest of us, Dick had gone to Yale with the managing director's son, which in finance was apparently the equivalent of divine ordination. So there he sat at the head of the conference table every morning, jaw polished, cufflinks gleaming, explaining concepts to people vastly more qualified than he was.

Including Pamela Weiss. Poor Pamela. Thirty-four years old. PhD in Economics from Princeton. Quiet voice. Brilliant mind. The kind of woman who could dismantle a Federal Reserve white paper before breakfast and still apologize when someone interrupted her.

Dick was currently “teaching” her how an inverted Treasury yield curve worked. I sat across from them in a charcoal business suit with my legs crossed tightly beneath the glass conference table, watching Pamela nod politely while Dick mangled macroeconomics with the confidence of a man who had never once doubted himself.

“The thing about inversion,” Dick droned, pacing beside the projection screen, “is that investors get emotional. They panic. That’s what causes the curve.”

Pamela opened her mouth slightly. Closed it again. I could practically hear the scream trapped behind her professional smile. The poor woman had spent her whole life making herself smaller so mediocre men could feel taller.

I hated it.

And Dick—

God, Dick was the kind of man who confused confidence with competence. Normally, I ignored him. Men

like Dick existed in every investment bank in America. But today I'd arrived in a mood.

Maybe it was the market volatility. Maybe it was the third espresso. Or maybe it was because I'd come prepared.

I shifted slightly in my chair. Beneath the table, I slipped one black pump off my foot. Dick's eyes flickered instantly downward.

There it is, I thought. Got you.

The man barely missed a beat in his lecture, but I caught the distraction immediately. Some men liked cleavage. Some liked lips.

Dick liked nylon. Interesting. I slowly flexed my foot beneath the conference table, letting the sheer black pantyhose catch the overhead light.

Dick's voice faltered for half a second. Pamela kept staring at her notebook. Oblivious. Or pretending to be.

I stretched slightly in my chair, arching my back as if my muscles ached from a long morning.

"Mmm," I murmured softly. "My feet are killing me today."

Dick looked down again. Absolutely hopeless.

Meanwhile Pamela sat there in her beige cardigan and sensible loafers, looking like she'd wandered accidentally into an investment bank from a public library in 1994.

It made me irrationally angry. Because she was brilliant. And brilliant women should never dress like apologies.

Dick continued rambling about bond markets while getting increasingly distracted by my dangling shoe. I let it hang from my toes lazily.

Then finally, I slipped off the other pump too. That got his full attention. I rolled my chair back slightly and rubbed the sole of one foot through the nylon with exaggerated relief.

Dick's eyes dropped, and stayed there. Men always thought they were subtle. They weren't. Not even close.

Pamela finally glanced over at me with mild confusion. I smiled innocently.

Dick cleared his throat.

"As I was saying—the yield curve is fundamentally driven by—"

I calmly placed both feet on the edge of the conference table.

Silence. Dick stopped talking entirely. The room went still. My black nylon-clad legs stretched elegantly across

polished glass while my discarded pumps rested beneath my chair.

Dick stared. Not even pretending otherwise now.

“Would you mind not doing that?” he said stiffly.

I smiled sweetly and said, “Write me up with HR.”

His jaw tightened.

“And I’ll make sure they hear all about the Caymans.”

That shut him up beautifully.

Pamela blinked between us, utterly lost.

Dick slowly sat down. For the first time in recorded history, he had nothing to say. I shot Pamela a tiny wink. She looked even more confused.

God, she was adorable.

At noon, I walked past Pamela’s office and leaned against the doorframe.

“Lunch?”

She looked up from a spreadsheet.

“Oh—I brought salad.”

“Tragic. Come on. My treat.”

Twenty minutes later, we were seated at a sleek little Italian restaurant downtown while Pamela nervously examined the wine list like it might contain exam questions.

“You know,” I said casually, sipping sparkling water, “you’re actually very pretty.”

Pamela nearly choked.

“I’m sorry?”

“I’m serious.” I gestured lightly toward her oversized glasses. “You just hide behind all this.”

She blinked at me.

“I don’t know what you mean.”

“Yes, you do.”

I leaned forward slightly.

“Pamela, you dress like you’re trying to convince the world not to notice you.”

Her cheeks reddened instantly.

“Oh, God.”

“No, no.” I smiled gently. “I’m not criticizing you. I’m saying you don’t have to disappear.”

She looked down at the table. Women always looked down when they’d spent years being taught not to occupy space. I hated that too.

“You’re smarter than every man in the department,” I continued. “Especially Dick. But somehow he’s the one performing expertise while you sit there nodding politely.”

Pamela stirred her drink quietly.

Then finally:

“My father always said men don’t like intimidating women.”

I laughed out loud.

“Pam, men don’t even like competent women.”

That startled a smile out of her. Good.

“There’s nothing wrong with being beautiful and intelligent at the same time,” I said. “You don’t have to pick one.”

She studied me carefully now.

“And what exactly are you proposing?”

I smiled slowly.

“Shopping.”

Three hours later, Pamela stood frozen in front of a mirrored dressing room platform at Bergdorf Goodman, looking like she’d accidentally become the star of a much more expensive life.

“Oh my God,” she whispered.

Exactly.

The transformation wasn’t dramatic because Pamela had changed.

It was dramatic because she’d finally stopped hiding.

The fitted charcoal skirt suit hugged her figure perfectly. The hemline sat just slightly above conservative expectations without crossing into absurdity. Black heels elongated her legs beautifully, and sheer black hosiery gave the whole look polish and confidence.

Pamela stared at herself like she was meeting a stranger.

"You have incredible legs," I informed her.

She laughed nervously.

"No, I don't."

"Yes. You absolutely do."

The sales associate nodded immediately.

"She really does."

Pamela blushed harder.

"I can't afford any of this."

"I know."

I pulled out my purse.

Then I casually revealed a thick stack of hundred-dollar bills.

Pamela's eyes widened.

"Holly..."

"Our friend Dick has some fascinating side income."

"What does that mean?"

“It means Dick is sloppy. He sells insider trading tips for cash, but he thinks he won’t get caught.”

I peeled off several bills.

“And occasionally sloppy men subsidize women who deserve better wardrobes.”

Pamela stared at me.

“Holly, are you telling me—”

“I’m telling you, Dick gets paid cash by people who shouldn’t be paying him cash. He could go to prison. Imagine Dick as someone’s cell bitch.”

Her mouth fell open, she giggled nervously.

“You stole from him?”

I smiled.

“Borrowed without permission.”

To my surprise, Pamela looked less horrified than fascinated. Interesting.

“Relax,” I said. “Dick probably won’t even notice.”

Then I tilted my head slightly.

“And honestly? Watching corrupt men finance powerful women is one of life’s underrated pleasures.”

Pamela laughed again. A real laugh this time. Not the timid little office laugh she used around male executives. That was the moment I realized she was changing already.

Confidence is addictive once women finally taste it. We bought three suits. Five pairs of shoes. A ridiculous amount of hosiery. Then makeup: Perfume, lipstick, the works. And finally, a five-hundred-dollar salon appointment that transformed Pamela's hair from "assistant professor under stress" into glossy brunette sophistication.

By the end of the evening, even Pamela walked differently. Straighter. Slower. More aware of herself. Good.

Three days later, Dick summoned both of us into his office.

I arrived first. Pamela followed seconds later. Dick looked up from his desk——and froze. Completely froze. Honestly, it was magnificent.

Pamela looked breathtaking. Her fitted navy skirt suit emphasized every elegant line of her figure. The black heels gave her posture confidence. Her hair framed her face softly now, and subtle makeup transformed her from invisible to unforgettable.

Most importantly, she looked aware of herself for the first time.

Dick blinked. Then blinked again.

"Where's Pamela?" he asked automatically.

I burst out laughing.

“This is Pamela.”

His expression was priceless.

“She just stopped dressing like a doormat.”

Pamela actually smirked. A smirk. Progress.

Dick stood awkwardly and said, “I... see.”

No, you don’t, I thought. You’re seeing her for the first time in your life.

His eyes kept drifting toward Pamela’s legs now. Toward the sleek black hosiery. Toward the heels. Toward confidence itself. Funny how men suddenly respected women once they became sexually aware of them.

Pathetic, really.

I sat casually on the edge of Dick’s desk. Pamela followed my lead after only the briefest hesitation. Dick looked deeply unsettled now.

Good.

“Sit down, Dick,” I said pleasantly.

He obeyed automatically before realizing he’d done it. I almost smiled.

“Pamela,” I continued smoothly, “why don’t you explain how the inverted yield curve actually works?”

Pamela glanced at me. Then, beautifully, she crossed one leg over the other and began speaking with calm authority.

“The inversion itself isn’t caused by panic,” she said evenly. “It’s driven by expectations around future growth, monetary policy, and inflation.”

Dick swallowed. Pamela continued. And for the next ten minutes, she dismantled every oversimplified thing Dick had said in the conference room earlier that week.

Elegantly. Precisely. Mercilessly.

Meanwhile, Dick sat there sweating slightly while two impeccably dressed women occupied his office like predators lounging in a private club.

At one point Pamela adjusted her heel slowly beneath the desk.

Dick’s eyes flickered downward instinctively. I caught it immediately. So did Pamela.

Interesting.

She looked at me briefly. I gave the tiniest approving nod. Confidence really did suit her.

By the time Pamela finished explaining the relationship between inversion, rate expectations, and recession forecasting, Dick looked like he wanted the floor to swallow him whole.

“Questions?” Pamela asked sweetly.

Dick cleared his throat.

“No.”

“Wonderful,” I said.

I rose slowly from the desk and walked around behind his chair.

Dick stiffened instantly.

“You know what your problem is?” I asked softly.

He stared straight ahead.

“You think confidence comes from making other people smaller.”

Silence.

“But actual power?” I leaned closer slightly. “Actual power is recognizing competence when it’s sitting right in front of you.”

Pamela watched quietly now, no longer shrinking from the moment. Good girl.

Dick adjusted his tie nervously.

“I may have underestimated Pamela’s—”

“Intelligence?” I suggested.

He swallowed.

“Yes.”

Pamela smiled calmly.

“Apology accepted.”

And there it was. Not revenge. Not humiliation. Something better. Correction.

Dick finally looked up at Pamela directly—not past her, not through her, but at her. Possibly for the first time ever.

“I’d like you to lead the client briefing next week,” he admitted quietly.

Pamela blinked. Then looked at me. I simply smiled.

Take the win.

She turned back toward Dick.

“I’d be happy to.”

As Pamela and I walked toward the door, I paused and glanced back at him.

“Oh, and Dick?”

He looked up cautiously.

“The next time you feel tempted to explain economics to the Princeton PhD...” I smiled sweetly. “Maybe don’t.”

Pamela laughed out loud beside me as we left the office together.

And somewhere behind us, for once in his life, Dick Harrow remained completely speechless.

After Pamela had returned to her office, I went back into Dick’s office and reached into my bag. I took out a large pair of pantyhose and threw them on his desk. I

leaned down and whispered in his ear, “If you wear these tomorrow, I’ll be extra nice to you.”

Chapter Nine

The Workout

The first thing people notice about me at the gym is my body.

The second thing they notice is that I know exactly what effect it has on them.

That combination tends to make certain men malfunction.

Especially men like Joe.

Every gym has a Joe.

Too much cologne. Too much confidence. Tank tops cut so low they practically qualify as surrender flags. The kind of guy who thinks dropping heavy weights loudly counts as personality.

For three weeks straight, Joe had transformed my evening workouts into his personal mating ritual.

Bang. Grunt. Flex. Look at Holly. Repeat.

I'd be halfway through cardio and suddenly—

CRASH.

Two enormous dumbbells hitting the floor hard enough to register on the Richter scale.

Then came the performance. Joe rolling his shoulders back. Veins bulging. Biceps flexing. Eyes drifting toward me to make sure I'd witnessed his glorious display of masculine greatness.

Honestly, it was exhausting. And ridiculous.

Because Joe wasn't even training properly. He was performing masculinity for an imaginary audience. Which, unfortunately for him, included me.

I stayed focused on the StairMaster, my pulse elevated, black leggings clinging to my hips while sweat gathered lightly beneath my sports bra. I took fitness seriously. Bodies like mine didn't happen accidentally. Men always assumed confidence was effortless on beautiful women.

It wasn't. It was discipline. Consistency. Control. Joe had none of those things.

Another loud crash echoed across the weight room. I glanced sideways. There he was again, chest puffed out,

pretending not to look at me while very obviously looking at me.

God, what a dork.

And yet beneath all the obnoxious alpha-male theater, I sensed something else.

Something hidden. Something softer. Men like Joe always overperformed masculinity for a reason. The louder the act, the bigger the insecurity underneath.

I smiled slowly to myself. Because I had a feeling I knew exactly what made Joe tick. And tonight, I was finally bored enough to find out if I was right.

I stepped off the StairMaster and wiped sweat lightly from my neck with a towel. Immediately, Joe noticed. Of course he did. Men like Joe monitored attractive women the way air traffic control monitored incoming planes.

I caught his eye briefly. Then I smiled. Not even a real smile. Just the smallest little amused grin. But to a man like Joe, that was basically a marriage proposal.

He abandoned his dumbbells almost instantly.

Hook.

Line.

Sinker.

“Hey,” he said, trying very hard to sound casual while failing spectacularly. “You need a spot?”

I looked him up and down slowly.

God, he was trying so hard.

“Actually,” I said, “I was going to do pullups.”

“Perfect,” he replied immediately. “I got you.”

Naturally.

We walked toward the pullup station together while I hid my smile. Joe strutted beside me like he’d just won a contest nobody else knew existed. Poor thing.

I reached the bar and stretched my arms overhead slowly before gripping it. Then I pulled myself upward smoothly. As I did, my tank top shifted slightly.

And Joe saw the dark hair beneath my arms. Exactly as planned.

He froze. Not dramatically. Just enough. His expression flickered through confusion, fascination, discomfort, curiosity—all in about half a second.

There it is, I thought. Interesting.

Most modern men acted like women naturally existed hairless below the eyebrows. Years of filtered Instagram perfection and beauty advertising had rewired their brains.

But fascination and discomfort often lived side-by-side.

And discomfort? Discomfort was revealing. I dropped lightly back to the floor and looked directly at him.

“What?” I asked innocently.

“Nothing.”

I tilted my head.

“You don’t like body hair?”

“No! I mean—it’s fine.” He said it too quickly.

I smiled slowly.

“I’m a woman, Joe. Women grow hair.”

“Right. Totally.”

But he couldn’t stop looking. That was the delicious part. The conflict.

Publicly, he wanted to reject it. Privately, he couldn’t stop thinking about it. Men are fascinating when they collide with their own hidden desires. I stepped closer.

Close enough to lower my voice.

“You can stop pretending,” I murmured.

His throat tightened visibly.

“I’m not pretending anything.”

“Sure.”

I lifted one eyebrow. Then, very deliberately, I raised one arm slightly while maintaining eye contact. Joe swallowed hard.

The gym buzzed around us—machines humming, music pulsing overhead, people moving through their routines completely unaware of the psychological earthquake happening beside the pullup bars.

“No one’s paying attention to us,” I said softly.

Joe glanced around instinctively.

Exactly like I knew he would.

And that tiny moment told me everything.

He wanted permission. Not seduction. Permission. There’s a difference. I leaned closer.

“So curious,” I whispered teasingly. “Go ahead, give it a sniff.”

Joe gave a nervous laugh, trying desperately to recover control of the situation.

But he’d already lost it. Checking to make sure that no one was watching, he leaned in and put his nose right up against my armpit. It tickled. He inhaled deeply, shuddering with guilty pleasure.

“Follow me,” I said.

Joe obeyed instantly.

Good boy.

I led him away from the crowded weight floor toward the quieter wellness wing near the yoga studios. The gym

had these ridiculous little “zen rooms” rich members used for meditation or breathing exercises or pretending stress could be cured by scented candles.

At this hour they were mostly empty. Perfect.

I opened one of the rooms and stepped inside. Soft lighting. Wood floors. A small bench against the wall.

Calming instrumental music drifting faintly through hidden speakers. Joe followed me in looking simultaneously excited and terrified. I closed the door behind us.

The click of the lock changed the atmosphere immediately. Private now.

Joe’s confidence returned for exactly three seconds. Then he stepped closer with that predictable male assumption that every flirtation eventually ended in access.

I held up one hand.

“No.”

He stopped instantly.

Confusion crossed his face.

“Oh. Sorry. I thought maybe...”

“You thought this was about you getting laid?”

His cheeks flushed bright red.

“I didn’t say that.”

“You didn’t have to.”

I stepped closer slowly now.

Joe was taller than me. Broader than me. Physically stronger in every obvious way.

And yet the room belonged entirely to me. That's the funny thing about certain men.

Underneath all the muscles and noise and swagger, they're desperate for someone to see through them.

"I know what you actually like," I said quietly.

Joe tried to laugh it off.

"You don't know anything about me."

"Don't I?"

I watched the tension in his jaw.

The uncertainty. The excitement he clearly wished he wasn't feeling.

He said, "So, what do I want?"

"I think you know." He tried to bluff, to act tough, with his muscles bulging like "Lady you don't tell ME what to do."

Not buying it.

"Get on all fours," I commanded. "Get on the floor like the dog you are."

He complied, looking embarrassed but more than a little turned on.

“You’re a dog. Dogs like to sniff things, no?”

Joe was confused, for real, but he didn’t say anything. I took off one of my sneakers and pulled off a filthy sock I’d been wearing all week. It stank so much I could barely stand the smell. I dangled it in front of Joe’s face. He pulled away, the public part of him pretending he wasn’t turned on like a freight train barreling down the track.

“Smell it,” I ordered him. He gave it a little sniff. He clearly liked it, but his façade was too strong. “Go ahead, Joe,” I said, more gently. “We both know this is what you want.”

I shoved the dirty sock right into his nose. He couldn’t help himself. He took the sock from her, pressed it against his nose, and took a deep, deep breath in. He held the scent inside for a long time before letting it out with a gasp.

“Now, lick my dirty, sweaty toes clean,” I commanded, taking off my other sneaker. I sat on the bench and dangled both feet in front of his face. He doesn’t need to pretend anymore. He slurps between my toes, licking them clean, completely.

I will admit that I enjoyed the sensation, but I liked it better that I had Joe where he needed to be. I got up to leave, barefoot and holding my sneakers in my hand. “I’ll

leave the socks. If you're polite to me and stop showing off so much, you can have a new pair every week."

Chapter Ten

The Headmistress

I smoothed the stiff fabric of the dowdy dress over my hips, the knee-length hem brushing against my thick white stockings with a whisper that sent a secret shiver up my spine. At 26, with my blond hair tucked away under the severe nun-like wig, I barely recognized the prim headmistress staring back from the mirror. The orthopedic shoes, clunky and unyielding, encased my size 7 feet, their heavy soles a stark contrast to the delicate heels I craved in my private moments. Beneath it all, the girdle cinched my 36-24-36 figure into an exaggerated hourglass of restraint, the outdated underwear from another era hugging my most intimate curves like a forbidden embrace. A D-cup brassiere completed the ensemble, modest yet insistent against my skin.

Mr. Johnson. My old honors English teacher from high school, ancient even then, now surely pushing 80. He'd always had that leering gaze in the back of the classroom, lingering a beat too long on the girls' legs, their skirts. A degenerate creep, he'd earned every bit of this 'arrangement' we shared. I did what he wanted—indulged his twisted old-fashioned fantasies—and in return, shoestore gift cards flowed like contrition. A thousand dollars' worth today, no doubt.

Guilt flickered faintly in my chest; he was once an authority figure, after all. But it faded quick. He was paying for those stolen glances, those unspoken hungers. And truth be told, the power thrilled me. Seeing a man like him—once so domineering with his red pen and stern lectures—reduced to quivering obedience under my control ignited a deep, sensual fire within.

My feet ached already in the orthopedics, a dull pressure that mirrored the building tension low in my belly. I loved this game, the tease of my feet hidden yet omnipresent, the promise of their dominance cloaked in dowdiness. Driving to his quiet suburban home, I flexed my toes against the stiff insoles, imagining the weight I'd soon press upon

him. Forbidden urges stirred—mine as much as his. What woman wouldn't savor bending such a relic to her will?

The door creaked open at my knock, and there he was: frail, white-haired, eyes downcast in instant submission. Without a word, he shuffled to the corner of his dimly lit living room, sinking to the floor, face pressed to the worn carpet. The sight sent a rush through me, my pulse quickening. I stepped inside, the heavy clunk of my shoes echoing like judgment.

"You've been a very bad boy," I intoned, my voice pitched low and authoritative, laced with that flirtatious edge I couldn't quite suppress. I approached, the orthopedic soles thudding softly. His shoulders tensed. Raising my hand, I delivered a slap—not brutal, but sharp enough to make his head snap, a red bloom staining his papery cheek. He flinched, a soft whimper escaping, but said nothing. He knew he deserved it. We both did.

I circled him slowly, the rustle of my stockings against each other a subtle symphony only I could hear. "You were caught stealing panties from the girls' locker room," I accused, letting the words hang heavy, dripping with recalled scandal. High school echoes: whispers of the pervy

teacher, socks and underthings vanishing. "What do you have to say for yourself?"

"Sorry, Headmistress," he murmured, voice trembling, eyes fixed on the floor. "I won't do it again."

I paused, tilting my head, the wig's severe lines framing my feigned sternness. "Do you like girls' underwear?" He shook his head vigorously, no, a flush creeping up his neck. "But you were stealing them. Do you like to *wear* them?"

Mortification twisted his features, his frail body shaking like a leaf in wind. It was exquisite—his humiliation feeding my arousal, a warm coil tightening within the girdle's firm grasp. He was utterly exposed, his secret perversions laid bare under my gaze. And it turned him on; I could see it in the subtle hunch of his shoulders, the quickened breath.

From my oversized purse—part of the ritual—I drew a pair of old-fashioned girl's bloomers, crisp white cotton with ruffled edges, relics from some antique shop I'd scoured just for him. "Put these on," I commanded, dangling them before his face. He pretended resistance, eyes widening in feigned horror, hands clutching at his trousers. "No, Headmistress, please..."

"Now," I snapped, voice brooking no argument. He relented, fumbling with his belt, pants pooling at his ankles. The bloomers slid up his skinny legs, the fabric bunching ridiculously over his hips. He stood there, transformed into a parody of femininity, the ruffles framing his shame.

"You look like a girl," I purred, stepping closer, my orthopedic shoe nudging his bare foot. "The boys might want to have fun with you." Terror flashed in his eyes—genuine fear mingled with a spark of dark curiosity. He trembled harder, the bloomers tenting faintly. My own body responded, a flush heating my thighs beneath the stuffy dress, the thick stockings suddenly too confining.

"Get on all fours, young man." He dropped obediently, palms flat, knees grinding into carpet. "Hands out front." He extended them, fingers splayed vulnerably. I lifted my right foot, the orthopedic shoe hovering, then pressed down—firm, deliberate—onto his knuckles. The heavy sole ground just enough to elicit a deep groan from his throat, pain lancing through him. I was careful, always; no breaks, just that exquisite edge where agony met craving. His fingers whitened under the pressure, veins standing out, and I twisted my ankle slightly, savoring the give of flesh beneath unyielding rubber.

He sneaked a peek upward, eyes darting under my dress hem to the shadowy promise of my girdle, the white stockings gleaming. The forbidden glimpse fueled him, his groan deepening into something almost reverent. My foot lingered, rocking gently, the sensation traveling up my leg—a dominant pulse that made my breath hitch. I loved this: my feet, so casually powerful in these clunky prisons, commanding his every sense.

"Fetch the hairbrush," I ordered, lifting my shoe with deliberate slowness, leaving his fingers throbbing. He scrambled on all fours into the next room, returning with the silver-backed brush, its bristles glinting. "Back on all fours."

Positioned behind him, I raised the brush high. The first swat landed on his panty-covered rear with a resounding crack, the bloomers doing little to soften the sting. He grunted, body jerking. Again and again—twelve times total—each strike precise, building a rhythm of punishment. His skin would be purple by morning, mottled bruises blooming like penance. Grunts turned to gasps, his hips twitching involuntarily, the humiliation weaving through pain into something profoundly sensual. I felt it too, each

impact vibrating up my arm, stirring the heat between my legs, the girdle's compression heightening every sensation.

Panting slightly, I set the brush aside and claimed the armchair, arranging my dowdy dress with prim care. Facing him, still on all fours, I crossed my stockinged ankles, the orthopedic shoes dangling like threats. "You want to kiss your Headmistress's thighs?"

He nodded frantically, on the verge of unraveling, eyes glassy with need. I parted my legs slowly, the dress hiking just enough to reveal the thick white stockings climbing my calves, the garter clips straining, the old-fashioned underwear and girdle framing the shadowed valley above. The air grew thick with anticipation, his breath ragged. He crawled forward, burying his face under the hem, nose brushing the nylon weave.

I knew what it smelled like down there—warm, musky from the girdle's confinement, a day's subtle essence trapped in fabric decades out of fashion. Part of the allure, the forbidden intimacy. His lips pressed to my inner thighs, soft and fervent kisses trailing upward, worshipful. The sensation was electric: his hot breath seeping through stockings, tongue daring a flick against the garter. My hands gripped the chair arms, toes curling in their ortho-

pedic cages, a forbidden urge blooming as his devotion washed over me. He nuzzled closer, inhaling deeply, lost in the sensory haze.

After a languid minute, I slapped the side of his head—lighter this time, a reminder. "Enough." He withdrew, dazed, lips glistening, eyes adoring.

Rising, I smoothed my dress, the ritual complete. From his trembling hand, he offered the envelope: a \$1000 shoe-store gift card, crisp and promising. New heels, strappy sandals—rewards for my feet's quiet conquests. Guilt? A whisper, drowned by satisfaction. "I'll be back next week," I said, turning toward the door, my orthopedic shoes thudding a final, authoritative retreat.

As I drove home, the wig discarded on the passenger seat, blond waves tumbling free, I replayed the afternoon in vivid detail. The way his fingers had yielded under my sole, the faint creak of the orthopedic as I bore down—pure dominance distilled through my feet. I'd felt the heat rise then, a sensual tide lapping at my core, the thick stockings rasping with each shift. Mr. Johnson, that withered shell of a man, had been mine utterly, his old creaks and perversions bent to my will.

High school memories surfaced unbidden: his lectures on forbidden fruit in literature, eyes flicking to my crossed legs under the desk. I'd known even then, sensed the hunger. Now, years later, I fed it back to him, laced with my own naughty thrill. The bloomers on his scrawny frame—ridiculous, emasculating—had made me bite my lip, imagining the boys' rough play he feared yet craved. His terror was intoxicating, a forbidden aphrodisiac.

And the spanking... oh, the brush's silver back meeting cotton-clad flesh, the ripple of impact. Each grunt had echoed in me, a shared pulse of pain and pleasure. My girdle had grown warmer, tighter, amplifying every quiver. Then, his face beneath my dress: the press of lips on thighs, the humid worship through nylon. I'd nearly let him linger, nearly parted wider to grant more, but control was my aphrodisiac. Slapping him away had sealed it, leaving him aching, me sated.

My feet, still trapped in those clunky shoes, tingled with residual power. I kicked them off at a stoplight, massaging arches clad in white stockings, toes flexing free. The gift card burned in my purse—visions of sleek stilettos, open-toed pumps to tease future conquests. Men who

posed as alphas, crumbling under my soles. Mr. Johnson was just the start; his payments funded my arsenal.

Guilt? Barely a shadow. He deserved this expiation, and I... I reveled in the sensuality of it all. The forbidden dance of dominance, the intimate press of foot to flesh, urge to urge. Next week, perhaps I'd escalate—let him polish my orthopedics with his tongue, or trace the stocking seams with trembling fingers. The possibilities stirred me anew, a naughty promise as the sun dipped low.

Back home, I stripped the costume layer by layer, the girdle releasing my curves with a sigh. Standing in mirror's glow, I admired the real me: blond, curvaceous, feet finally bare and pampered. But the afternoon's echoes lingered. I slipped into silk slippers, the contrast decadent, and poured wine, sinking into the couch.

Thoughts drifted to his peeks under my dress—the girdle's stark lines, the underwear's antique modesty veiling heat. He'd inhaled it all, kisses fervent on thighs that quivered under his touch. My hand trailed absently, savoring the memory's warmth. Foot fetish ran deep in me; not just the act, but the symbolism—my soles as scepters, grinding authority into supplicants.

Stepping on his fingers replayed in slow motion: the compression, his groan vibrating up my leg like a lover's moan. Pain as communion, humiliation as foreplay. He'd shaken so beautifully in those bloomers, a sissified shadow craving violation. 'The boys might want to have fun...' His curiosity had peeked through terror, fueling my own dark fantasies.

The hairbrush swats: twelve crisp reminders, his rear blooming under my hand. I'd hit harder than last time, testing limits, his grunts music to my ears. Purple bruises tomorrow—a mark of my visit, lingering tenderness with every shift.

And the thigh kisses... his face lost in my shadowed world, lips mapping nylon paths. The smell—warm, womanly, trapped—had drawn him like moth to flame. I'd felt powerful, desired, the headmistress facade cracking to reveal my flirtatious core.

The card? Already online, selecting: red patent heels, strappy with ankle ties, perfect for ensnaring gazes. Mr. Johnson's dollars buying my weapons of tease. No guilt now, only anticipation. He was my willing penitent, and I his teasing confessor.

As night fell, I massaged lotion into my feet, fingers lingering on arches, heels, toes—sensual self-worship mirroring his devotion. Forbidden urges sated for now, but ever hungry. Next visit, who'd know? Perhaps I'd command him to kneel and inhale my stocking feet, or press soles to his cheek post-spank. The game evolved, my dominance eternal.

Chapter Eleven

What Are You Doing Here?

I stepped through the front door, the summer heat clinging to my skin like a lover's breath, my blouse already unbuttoned halfway as I kicked off my pumps in the foyer. At 26, with my blond hair tousled from the drive and my 36-24-36 curves straining against the day's work attire, I craved the cool sanctuary of my enormous walk-in closet.

My older sister Wendy and her 18-year-old son Brian were crashing at my place for a few weeks—family time, she called it. I'd known Brian since he was a drooling infant, watched him grow into this shy kid who lately postured like some fake 'bro' alpha from those podcasts he

devoured. Heading to college soon, all bravado and gym selfies, but I saw through it. The rental car was gone; they must be out. Perfect—time to slip into something sleek for tonight's business dinner.

Fingers deftly unhooking my bra, I let it fall to the floor en route, my D-cups swaying free, nipples tightening in the air-conditioned hush. The closet door swung open to my shoe paradise: hundreds of pairs, from strappy stilettos to sky-high platforms, each a testament to my size 7 obsessions.

My feet, naturally dominant instruments of tease and control, deserved nothing less. But there, amid a dozen of my favorites—scattered like fallen soldiers—was Brian. In his underwear, kneeling, one hand rubbing the insole of my red patent heel against his thigh, the other pressing a black pump to his nose, inhaling deeply.

'What the hell are you doing in here?' My voice sliced the air, sharp as a stiletto heel. This was my sacred space, these shoes my treasures—expensive, cherished, violated by his slobber and whatever else he was leaving behind. He froze, eyes wide with horror, the heel tumbling from his grip.

'Aunt Holly! Don't tell my mom! Please!' He scrambled back, cheeks flaming, hands futilely shielding his lap. Tears welled, his bro facade crumbling like cheap pleather.

I crossed my arms under my bare breasts, unashamed—hell, a flicker of amusement stirred as his gaze darted anywhere but there. 'You'd deserve it, Brian. Letting my sister know her son's a creep, defiling my private shoes with your... secretions.' The word hung heavy, laced with the forbidden thrill of his exposure. He was mortified, trembling, but beneath it, something deeper—a bottled urge I'd sensed in his furtive glances at my legs, my feet during family dinners.

He dropped to his knees fully, apologies tumbling out near tears. 'I'm so sorry, Aunt Holly. I couldn't help it. They're just... so perfect.' That's when it clicked: not mere fetish, but yearning. To wear them. To become them. 'You want to slip into my heels, don't you? Feel them hug your feet like a second skin?'

He nodded, mortified beyond words, shoulders shaking. A rush heated my core—my dominant nature awakening, the sensual power of guiding this hidden desire. Men like him, posing as alphas, reduced to quivering need under my control. Especially family, the taboo edge sharp-

ening every sensation. 'It's okay, sweetie,' I softened, stepping closer, my bare feet padding silently over cool tiles. 'I get it. Those urges we bury. I won't tell Wendy—if you do this right. My way.'

He looked up, hope flickering through shame, still avoiding my exposed chest. Good boy. 'First, shower. Clean that boy-sweat off. I'll meet you in the bathroom.' He bolted, and I followed after a moment, gathering supplies: razor, cream, my secret stash of transformative delights.

In the steamy bathroom, he stood under the spray, eyes down. I rolled up my sleeves, grabbed the shave cream. 'Legs first. Smooth as silk.' Foam whispered over his calves, razor gliding in long strokes, revealing skin that gleamed like a girl's. His hesitation bubbled—'Aunt Holly, I... this is gay or something'—bro panic slipping out.

I gripped his chin, forcing eye contact, my voice a velvet command. 'I know you want this, Brian. Stop pretending to be that podcast tough guy. Embrace it.' He relented, breath hitching as I shaved his face next, erasing stubble, unveiling softness. Water cascaded, rinsing away the facade, leaving him vulnerable, aroused in ways he couldn't hide.

Toweled dry, we moved to my vanity. First, the red thong—silky, barely-there. I slid it up his newly smooth legs, snapping the waistband against his hips. Damn, he looked good: those natural male lines, legs tapering to a pert ass that any girl would envy. It enraged me a little, the injustice, fueling my dominance. 'Perfect fit. Feel that fabric kiss your skin?'

Next, the black lacy bra. Ill-fitting on his flat chest, straps digging playfully. I hooked it from behind, fingers brushing his shoulders, adjusting cups for humiliating effect. 'There. A little something extra.' His reflection showed budding femininity, cheeks flushing deeper.

The sexy minidress came next—crimson silk, hugging curves he didn't have but longed for, hem flirting mid-thigh. I zipped it slow, savoring his shivers. Then the old wig: long, wavy auburn locks framing his face. Makeup sealed it—blue eyeshadow smoky and bold, blush dusting cheeks, ruby red lipstick plump and inviting. I leaned in close, lips inches from his as I outlined them, our breaths mingling in the mirror's glow.

Finally, the shoes: my 2-inch black suede heels, petite enough for his small feet. He slipped them on, toes nestling perfectly, arches lifting him into sway. 'Walk for me,' I

urged, and he did—tentative steps turning graceful, hips undulating naturally. The click of heels on tile echoed my pulse, a sensual rhythm of transformation.

To the full-length mirror. 'Oh my GOD, I can't believe it! I look like a girl!' His voice cracked, higher, feminine in awe. Hands roamed the dress, heels shifting weight, lips parting in ruby shock.

I circled him, eyes devouring the change—my doing, my control. 'Careful now, alpha bro. Your college friends might hit on you. Want to bend you over.' He nearly fainted, knees buckling, a soft whimper escaping painted lips. The power surged through me, low and insistent, my bare feet flexing against the floor, yearning to press dominance home.

He turned, throwing arms around me in a tearful hug, dress whispering against my skin, heels elevating him to nuzzle my neck. 'Thank you, Aunt Holly. This feels... right.' Warmth spread, forbidden and tender, his smooth legs brushing mine.

'Our secret,' I murmured, stroking the wig, inhaling his fresh, makeup-sweet scent. 'Keep the whole outfit. Call me anytime you need more—panties, heels, lessons in walking

that walk.' I slipped the shoes off him gently, handing over the ensemble in a bag, watching him clutch it like treasure.

He left for the rental car return—changed back but forever altered. Alone, I replayed it: his hands caressing my heels, nose buried in leather, the raw hunger. Catching him had ignited something primal—my foot fetish entwined with his crossdreams, a dominant dance of urges unleashed.

In the closet, I picked up the abused pump, inhaling faintly—his essence mingled with mine. Smooth legs under my razor, the glide unveiling silkiness I'd envied in men before. The thong snapping taut, bra's lace mocking his chest. Dress clinging, wig cascading, makeup blooming color on pale skin. And those heels—his feet arching perfectly, steps clicking surrender.

His mirror shock: pure ecstasy, the bro shell shattered. Hug tight, body soft against mine, heels' lift making him mine in height. Sensual waves crashed in memory—power to reshape, to tease forbidden doors open. My feet tingled, bare soles craving to step into his new world, grind gentle authority.

Business dinner awaited, but I lingered, slipping into strappy sandals, toes painted ruby like his lips. Wendy

and Brian would return clueless; our secret pulsed beneath. Next time? More heels, perhaps stockings on those legs, my soles guiding his stance. The naughty thrill built—family ties twisted sensual, dominance eternal.

Night fell, dinner conquered in stilettos that commanded the table. Home, wine in hand, thoughts drifted to Brian's closet invasion. Shoes as portals: rubbing, smelling, yearning to inhabit. I'd given him that—thong's intimate hug, bra's teasing bind, dress's silken embrace.

Shaving ritual replayed: foam melting under blade, skin emerging vulnerable. His panic—'this is gay'—dissolved under my gaze, insistence peeling layers. Makeup brush strokes: eyeshadow veiling boyishness, lipstick plumping desire.

Heels' perfection: small feet claiming my domain, sway hypnotic. Tease of friends' advances sent him reeling, curiosity sparking in widened eyes. Hug's press: smooth thighs to mine, wig tickling, tears salty on skin.

My body hummed, curves shifting in robe, feet propped—size 7 scepters of control. He'd call; I knew. More transformations, my guidance sensual, firm. Forbidden aunt-nephew urges, foot-led into femininity's depths. No guilt, only arousal's glow.